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**WIN THE
TOP 10
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SEE THE PC ZONE CHARTS
PAGE 26



48 DEUS EX The best bits of *Half-Life* and *System Shock 2* in one game.



68 THIEF II Garrett returns for more roof-gliding, lock-picking, guard-beating, treasure-stealing antics. Find out what we think in our exclusive review.

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124 PLANESCAPE: TORMENT A full walkthrough for this superb RPG.



80 SUPERBIKE 2000 Our review of the latest in EA's brilliant racing series.



72 THEOCRACY Civilization meets *Age of Empires II* in a superb new title.



108 HOW TO... Shop Online. Read our advice before you spend.

PCZ CONTENTS

PREVIEWS

We take a look at the games you're going to be playing later this year

- 44 KLINGON ACADEMY**
Ever wanted to blow up Captain Kirk? *Star Trek* goes the space sim way
- 48 DEUS EX**
We take an in-depth look at Warren Spector's new masterpiece with the man himself and some exclusive screenshots
- 52 SUDDEN STRIKE**
This WWII RTS gets ready to steal the crown from *Command & Conquer*
- 55 COMMANDOS 2**
The follow-up to Pyro's best-selling strategy title looks like a winner
- 56 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER**
Balls and sticks can make a great game
- 57 ALLEGIANCE**
Online space shoot 'em up from Microsoft
- 58 EVOLVA**
The first genetically modified game?

REVIEWS

The most definitive reviews section around. All the latest and greatest PC games (and, of course, some of the worst) come under the cynical PC ZONE microscope. This is the place to come before shelling out on that new game you've got your eye on

NEW GAMES

- 68 THIEF II: THE METAL AGE**
- 72 THEOCRACY**
- 74 SILKOLINE HONDA MOTOCROSS GP**
- 76 EURO LEAGUE FOOTBALL**
- 79 GRAND PRIX WORLD**
- 80 SUPERBIKE 2000**
- 82 JANE'S USAF**
- 84 ASHERON'S CALL**
- 87 RISK 2**
- 88 RISING SUN**
- 88 ARMY MEN IN SPACE**
- 89 Q*BERT**
- 89 AIRPORT INC**

90 TZAR: BURDEN OF THE CROWN

90 TREADMARKS

90 MISSILE COMMAND

91 LEGO ROCK RAIDERS

91 PONG

91 MINI-GOLF MASTER

SUPERTEST

92 SPACE SHOOT 'EM UPS

As usual, our games experts get completely spaced out, casting their critical eye on the best space combat sims in the known universe

BUDGET REVIEWS

101 HALF-LIFE: GENERATIONS

Haven't got the game of the millennium yet? Now there's no excuse...

101 HIDDEN & DANGEROUS PACK

103 SCREAMER 2

103 HEART OF DARKNESS

103 BROKEN SWORD 2

103 WORMS REINFORCEMENTS

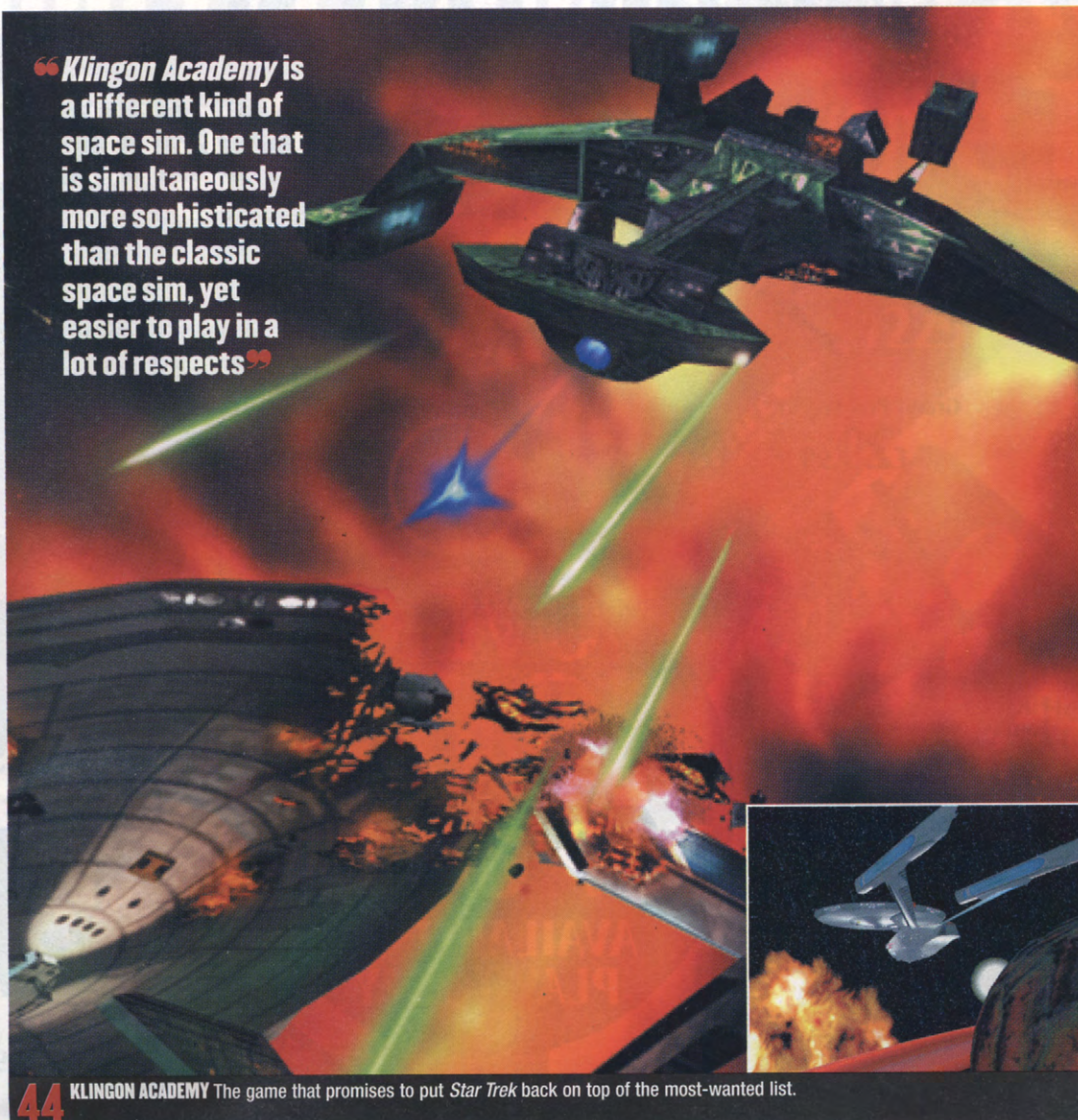
103 3D PETS

READERS' REVIEWS

104 FEEDBACK

This month we are focussing on the games the whole world seems to be talking about. The Quake III versus Unreal Tournament debate rages on while we discuss whether the brilliant Planescape: Torment should have got a 'Classic' award

“Klingon Academy is a different kind of space sim. One that is simultaneously more sophisticated than the classic space sim, yet easier to play in a lot of respects”



44 KLINGON ACADEMY The game that promises to put *Star Trek* back on top of the most-wanted list.

ON THE CDs



**FULL DETAILS
PAGE 149**

This month there are two round things on the cover bringing you more fun for your money than ever before

DON'T MISS

**MAPS, SKINS AND
MODS FOR:**

**HALF-LIFE
UNREAL
TOURNAMENT
QUAKE III**

On our second CD you'll find the finest selection of demos, patches and utilities currently available. This month is a RTS-fest with *Shogun – Total War*, *Theocracy* and the rather late *C&C: Tiberian Sun*, plus *Superbike 2000*, *Edgar Torres' Extreme Biker* and *Nox*

BULLETIN

Quite literally the most definitive games news section in the universe

16-41 BULLETIN

Gaming news from all over the planet. If it's worth knowing, we'll tell you

16 TOP STORIES

We take a look at some of the big games of the future. Read about the gorgeous *Praetorians* from Pyro and the stand-alone *X-Tension*

25 TECH-HEAD

The latest hardware news and more

26 THE PC ZONE CHARTS

Current and past PC game charts, and the chance to win the Top 10 games

30 ONLINE DIARY

Hot news on our new server

40 HOTSHOTS

A strategy-fest featuring *Earth 2150*, *Dark Reign 2* and *Ground Control*

REGULARS

Lots of stuff about stuff, or something

12 MAILBOX

Go on – get it off your chest. Write a letter to the editor and if you're really lucky you might win a Microsoft IntelliMouse

130 SUBSCRIBE

Save money and get *PC ZONE* delivered

140 PCZ TOP 100

We've revamped and rescored all the games in our Top 100 – just for you

149 ON THE CD

As usual the *PC ZONE* CD is packed full of all the latest playable demos and patches. See the panel, top right, to find out what we've got for you this month

156 WHAT'S ON YOUR HARD DRIVE?

Readers reveal their innermost secrets to *PC ZONE*

TROUBLESHOOTER

The most extensive and comprehensive tips section in town

116 CHEATMASTER

Having trouble completing your favourite games? Let Keith be your guide

118 TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION – PART TWO

The rest of our Lara walkthrough

122 PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

We love this game and so we thought we'd treat you to a full strategy guide

126 DEAR WANDY

He speaks binary, don'tcha know

128 WATCHDOG

Got a gripe about a game or a publisher? Have a cry on Adam Phillips' shoulder

END ZONE

Just when you thought the mag had ended... blimey, a whole lot more!

154 EXTENDED PLAY

Find out what's on our special second CD, as we prolong the life of the already immortal *Half-Life*, *Unreal Tournament* and *Quake III*. You'll find skins, maps and mods (including the much talked about *Counter-Strike for Half-Life*).

158 THE WORLD ACCORDING TO...

We talk to Bullfrog deserters Lost Toys and find out what the hell they're talking about when they promise us 'games with a twist'

162 COMMENT

Paul Presley talks about his fantasies. Scary, huh?

☎ Sony's new screen is on page 25

WIN! THE COMPO NO ONE FINDS Correctly answer this month's cover question and you could win some PC goodies. Send your entry on a postcard addressed to: **The Compo No One Finds (88), PC ZONE, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ**. The first entry with the correct answer plucked out of the hat wins a mystery prize. The editor's decision is final. Closing date: Thursday 6 April 2000. The winner of our February (#66) cover compo was Tommy Shiphouse from Oxford, who wins something from the *ZONE* prizes cupboard for sending in the correct answer (Garrett) to our last little teaser.

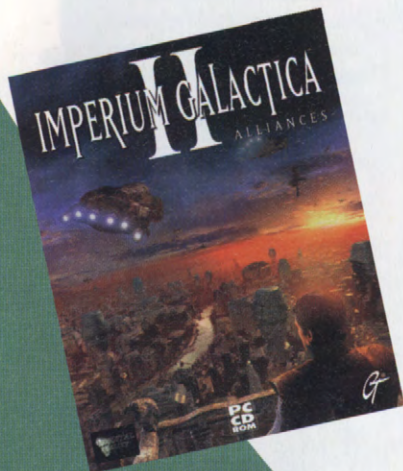


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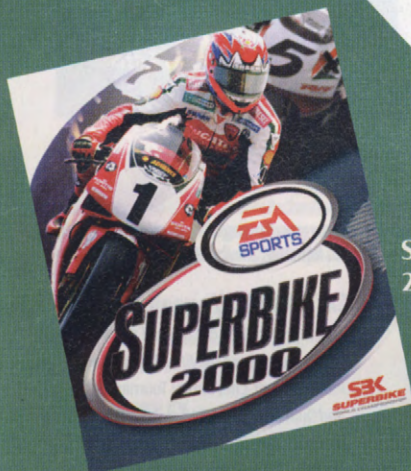
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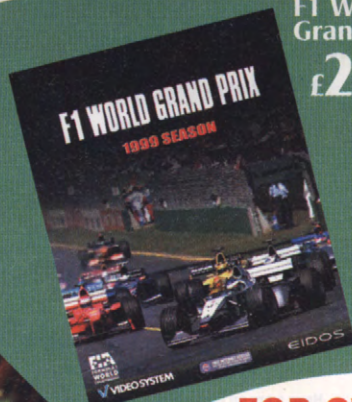
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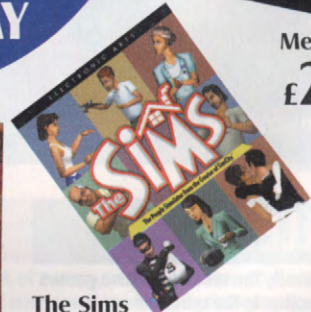
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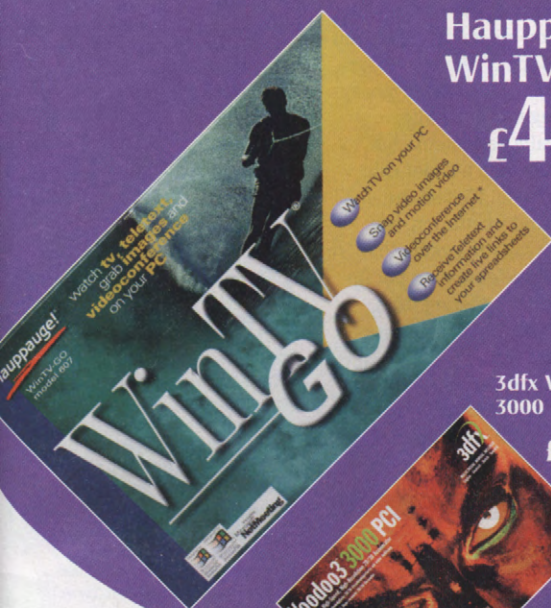
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SLIP SLIDING AWAY

Every issue we look forward to the major games we were promised for review, and every issue almost without fail, some of them don't make it. *Vampire, Daikatana, Black & White, Diablo 2* are all late and have all had their release dates put back, some by several months. I know how you all feel about this. I know because we receive countless letters and emails asking where these games are, and you correctly point out that in some cases we advertised in a previous issue that these titles were imminent for review. You are unhappy when this happens. Don't be.

Publishers often set release dates that they think they can meet, only to discover that as the deadline looms their

original targets were unrealistic. If a game slips, it is not yet finished. All the development teams working on the titles I've just mentioned take great pride in their work and will not release their games until they know they have them tuned to perfection.

This is a good thing, particularly in light of the uproar surrounding the release of *Ultima Ascension* in the US at the end of last year. This game was released three months before it was ready. It was riddled with bugs and fatal crash errors, and has just received its third major bug-fix patch since its release, and many people in the US are still having problems with it. If you continue to insist that developers

release games when they say they are going to, this is exactly the kind of quality control you are going to get. You will all become unpaid beta testers for unfinished products and, what's more, you will be paying for the privilege.

We at ZONE fully understand how disappointing it is when a major title misses its release date. We feel the same disappointment and frustration, but we would rather wait for a game that is fully playable on release than put up with a horde of titles suffering from *Ascension* syndrome. Think about it – you know it makes sense.

Best of luck, enjoy the issue and I'll see you all again next month.

Chris Anderson, Editor

MEET THE ZONE TEAM

All PC ZONE's reviewers are experts in their field. We like to give every game that comes in for review the best chance, which is why we give it to a reviewer who's a fan of the genre



CHRIS ANDERSON

What's your favourite race in *Star Trek* and why?

Klingons – I like the name and I'm shallow like that.

I would make a good Klingon because...

I'm aggressive? Domineering? Well it's certainly not the looks.



DAVE WOODS

I haven't got a clue about any of the races in *Star Trek*, apart from Klingons.

It would get me one step closer to being assimilated by Seven of Nine.



RICHIE SHOEMAKER

The green-skinned tarts that Shatner seems to cop off with every week.

After seven pints of lager I talk like one.



MARK HILL

The Borg. They're zombies in space, a metaphor for mindless Internet addicts and always brighter up a boring episode.

My northern accent often makes me unintelligible.



MARTIN KORDA

The race against time when Spock and McCoy are trying to fix that homing device onto a torpedo in ST6.

I've already got long hair, so I wouldn't have to wear one of those stupid wigs.



PAUL MALLINSON

Tribbles. Because they are hairy, funny and cause lots of unnecessary trouble. A lot like me really.

I get a bit frisky after drinking too much blood wine.



STEVE HILL

What's your favourite race in *Star Trek* and why?

For f**k's sake, I haven't watched *Star Trek* since Shatner was slim, so, as per usual, I've absolutely no idea what you're on about.

I would make a good Klingon because.....

Because I'm a grumpy old git.



PAUL PRESLEY

Australians. No matter how far into the universe you travel, there'll always be an Aussie backpacker there.

I've got the hair for it. I'd have to dye it of course – who's heard of a ginger Klingon?



ANDREW WRIGHT

Scantily-clad females for the obvious reasons.

I'm very masculine.



KEITH PULLIN

I don't think we should discriminate – we should love the Universe as one.

I wouldn't actually – I'm far too nice and cuddly.



ADAM PHILLIPS

Err... erm... the Ferengi – they're the only ones who seem remotely human – ie they're greedy.

Pictures tell a thousand words.



PHIL WAND

Tribbles. Because they squeak when you stamp on them.

I like stamping on Tribbles.

PCZONE

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WIN! Can you spot the April Fool in this month's issue? Send entries on the back of a postcard to: I've Read The Small Print (88), 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ by Thursday 6 April. Winner and prize announced same place next issue.

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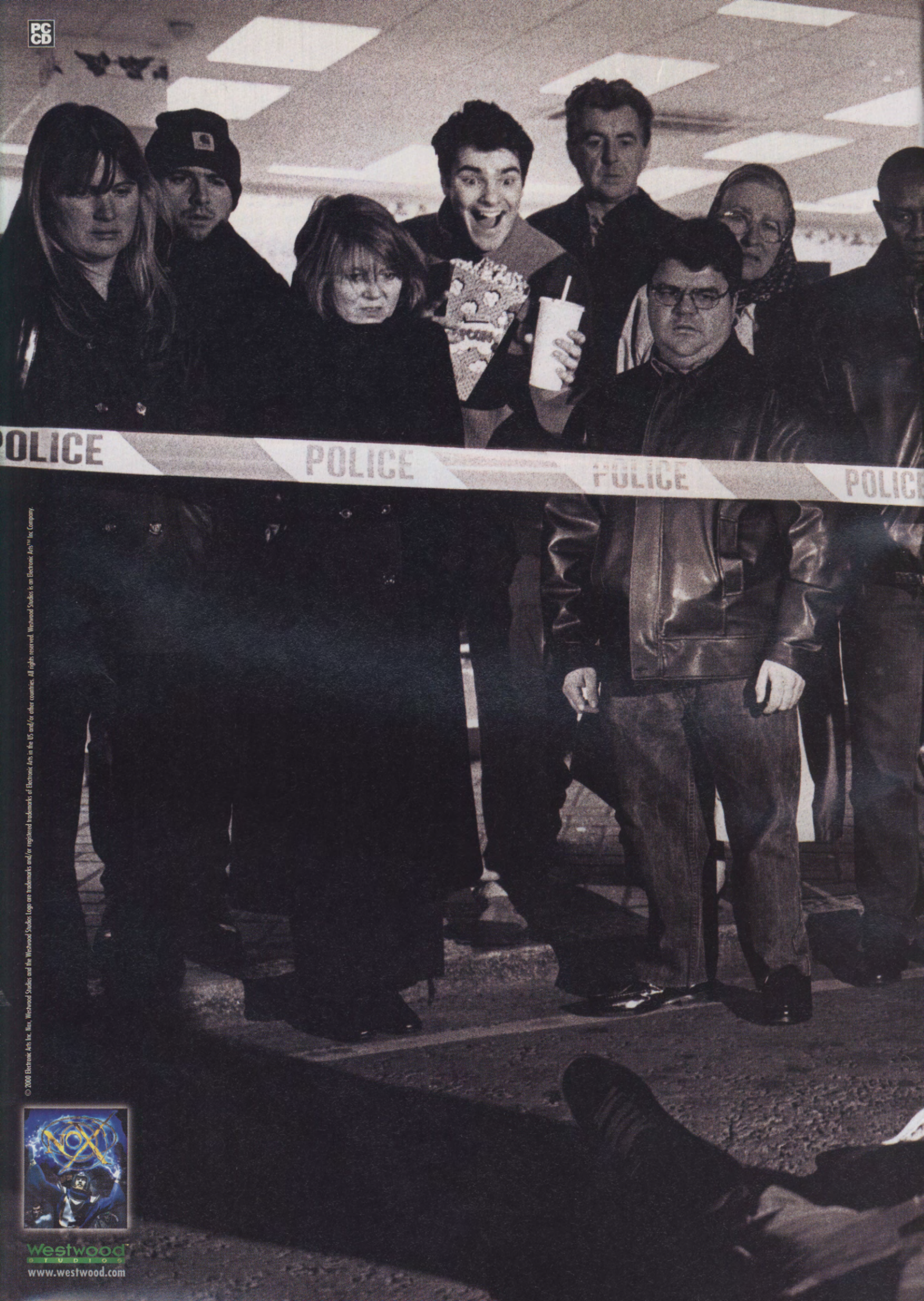
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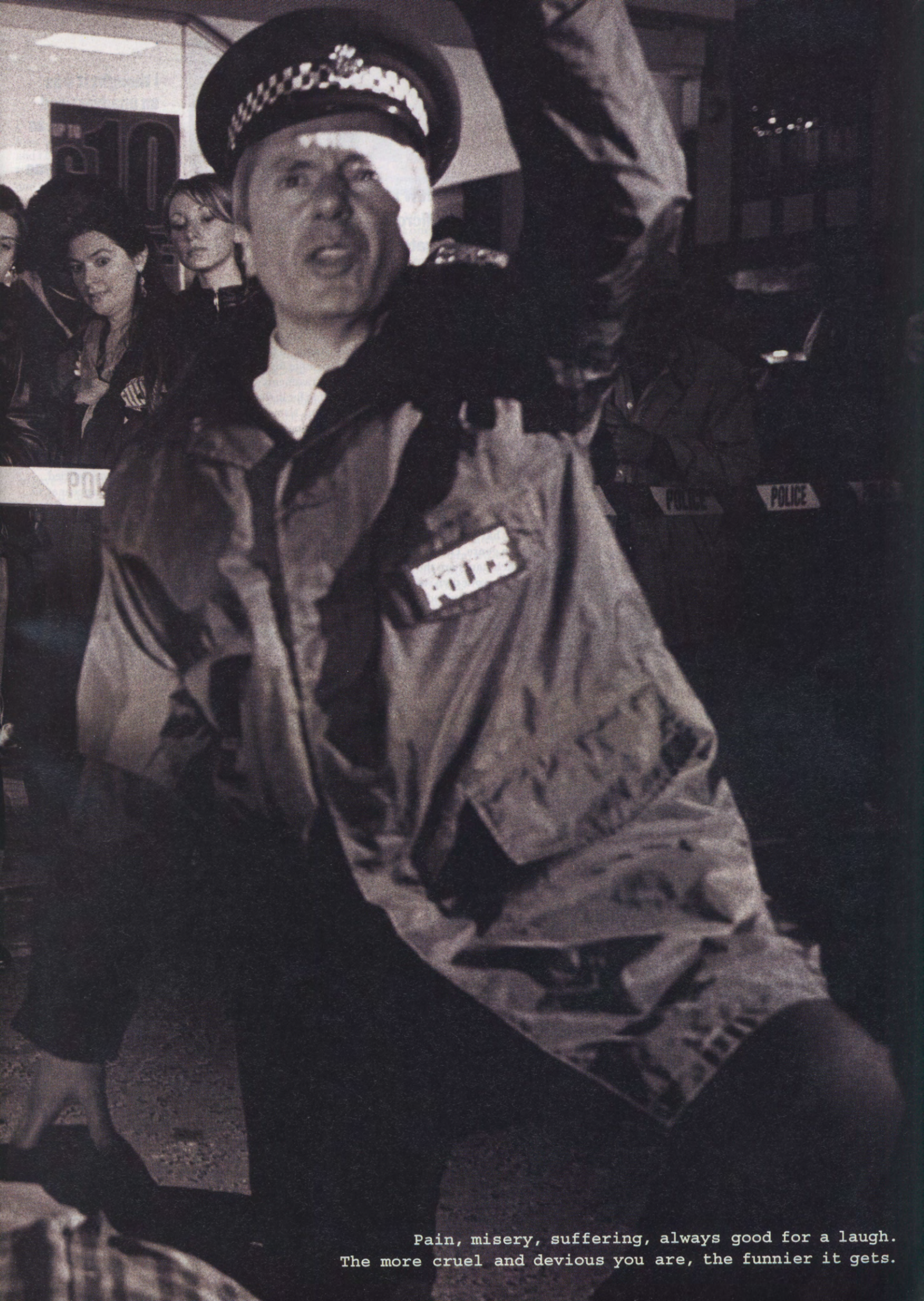
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MAILBOX



If Mailbox has taught us anything over the past few months, it's that some people will do literally anything to win a Microsoft mouse, as this month's batch of hopefuls eagerly demonstrates

ANSWERED BY Chris Anderson

CONTACT INFO

Write to us, and if your letter is selected as Letter of the Month we'll send you a prize.

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CHAT FORUM If you've got something pressing to say, check out the 'lively' chat forum on our website. Point your browser at www.pczone.co.uk for further info.

QUALITY NOT QUANTITY

I really enjoy reading your mag, but I have recently realised something. I believe in quality not quantity and your magazine's contents are getting better every month. But recently I have noticed the page count is becoming less and less and the price is more expensive. In your Christmas issue you had 186 pages. In your January issue you had 162 pages and in the last two issues you had 146 pages. Even though I believe in the quality, it would be nice to have the quantity as well. Keep up the good work though.

Michael Baba, Surrey

★ The amount of pages in the magazine is dictated by the amount of games released in that given month. We were flooded with games to review for Christmas and January, hence a bigger issue size to fit them all in. The beginning of the year is always a slow time for the games industry, but with several major games pending release, the issue will expand 'as if by magic' over the next few months, so we can cover them all in minute detail.

VIEWPOINT: PART 1

In the politest sense and not meaning to cause offence to your readers or the serf who put it together, the new Top 100 sucks! I agree with the idea of having a benchmark game against which others are compared, but not the fact that only one game within each genre can gain a 'Classic' rating (bar the sublime *Unreal Tournament*).

Therefore, I think you should restructure the system allowing for the top three games to be on a par and

have a 'Genre Buster', a game that should be owned by all PC gamers for its greatness! Barring that, I have found nothing wrong with the magazine except for the belated and shoddy release of *Sin* coupled with the lack of a *TA Kingdoms* demo, and no review of *Vampire or Soldier Of Fortune* last issue.

Ben Worthington, Cheltenham

★ As *Unreal Tournament* clearly demonstrates, there is no rule that says we can only have one 'Classic' in each genre. Our genre benchmarks are the games that in your own words "should be owned by all PC gamers" and it is totally pointless to do as you suggest and have the top three games on a par. How are you supposed to know which one to buy in those conditions? Rest assured there will be more PC ZONE classics during the course of the year, but only games that truly deserve this rating will receive it. *Vampire and Soldier Of Fortune* have been delayed, hence no reviews of these games this month. See my editorial leader on p8 for a full explanation of this.

VIEWPOINT: PART 2

This letter may seem a little long, but what the hooey - I've got points to make and I'll make 'em (and you'll probably edit it anyway). Firstly, love the mag, buy it every month, gush, gush, etc. Right, to business.

The Stalinist rewriting of games history with your new Top 100 was a much-needed breath of fresh air - finally, no more *Quake II*

ahead of *Half-Life*, no more *Carmageddon II* as best ever 'driving game', etc. But I think, in trying to compensate for these, ahem, 'embarrassments', you've gone too far in the wrong direction. Namely, you're now scoring games too low.

Fair enough, you can't go out giving perfect scores, but let's take *Half-Life* and *System Shock 2*. Both stand out as the pinnacle of what can currently be done with the PC. What's the harm in giving them scores of around 97-99 per cent, seeing as they represent the peak of gaming excellence? After all, they'll be re-evaluated and pushed further down the order when something better comes along, but at the moment

"I thought it was an unadvertised *Stingray* demo, as it looked like an underwater scene filmed near the sewage outlet of New York City"

DAVID DAWSON IS IMPRESSED WITH *FINAL FANTASY VIII*

Surely, back in the 'olden days', it would have been mid-nineties? Still, I can't really argue - on the whole, the new system works a treat.

Finally, you can't fool me. I've spotted 'Chuck' Brooker's lobotomy. There's no way he turned from angry, snarling monster to seemingly-nice-guy overnight (although, I was worried when he didn't appear at all in the Millennium issue - I was glad to see him back in the March issue)...

Seb Patrick, Liverpool

★ 86 per cent is a very high score, and represents an excellent game, but we didn't consider it to be a classic for various reasons. And there is no rule that says no game will get above 95 per cent, but any game that exceeds this mark will have to be something that all gamers will absolutely love and frankly that is not likely to happen. I printed both these letters because although the majority of you are right behind our scoring system, some of you still seem a little confused by it. Read our explanation of how the scores work in the Top 100 intro page (p140) and you will find all is made clear. And yes, Charlie has indeed turned into a really nice guy overnight, we don't know how it happened, he even has a teddy bear! As for *The Sims*, Mark Hill would like to point out that you can have a game that introduces an amazing concept, without the game playing well enough to score one of our hard-to-get 'Classic' ratings.



SUPER PRIZES TO BE WON

For the next few issues of PC ZONE, we will be giving away a Microsoft IntelliMouse to everyone who gets a letter printed in Mailbox. These digital rodents are perfect for 3D shooters and games that require a quick and precise response from your pointing device - you can even use them with Windows 98 if you

really want to. So get your writing skates on and send us your literary masterpieces. We promise not to be rude when we reply to them. Well, not very.



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COUNTER-STRUCK!

Don't get me wrong I am a huge fan of your magazine and I'm a subscriber. I love *Half-Life* and *Opposing Force* and often play *TFC* online. However, one major mod that is often overlooked in your magazine is *Counter-Strike*. In my opinion this is the best of the mods for *Half-Life*. If any of you haven't played it, I recommend you download it immediately.

As with *TFC*, the pace is a little slower than straight hardcore deathmatch and the team element is large, but everything works for it. The atmosphere is tense and can lead to huge bouts of swearing when you have just spent all your hard-earned money on a big weapon only to have some camper pick you off from a mile away. However, this does not draw away from the game play, it makes it better. I think you should include *Counter-Strike* on one of your cover discs, so everyone can enjoy the wonders of rescuing hostages or bombing targets as either terrorists or counter terrorists.

Metal Ed, via e-mail

★ No sooner said than done, *Counter-Strike* is indeed a wonderful thing and is included on this month's CD for all the world to see.

HE WANTS A MOUSE

Firstly I would like to praise the sheer quality of your magazine. Some may consider this statement a mere tactical ploy to win over the affection of a Microsoft IntelliMouse, however this is



A Res-Dogs stand-off in the sublime *Counter-Strike*.

not true. Nevertheless, no compliment goes without a complaint.

Over the past few months I've noticed a stream of late or delayed reviews. This is exceedingly annoying as the more cautious among us are forced to leave brand new titles on the shelves until you get round to rating them.

Examples? How about *Quake III*? Although this was anticipated to be a top class game your review did not appear until a month after the game was released. Another example is *Driver*. As the game's release date grew ever nearer I panicked and bought a copy of *PC G*****. Using its particularly erratic methods of game-reviewing they somehow managed to churn out a 90 per cent rating for this title. Feeling full of confidence I ordered the game through a mail order company, but a day before I received it I got my issue of *PC ZONE*. You'd only scored it at 82 per cent and after playing it I soon discovered why and wouldn't have bought it on the strength of the review.

Having exhausted my complaint supply, I'm sure there's a good reason for these belated reviews. I would imagine that other PC magazines are reviewing titles premature to their actual completion.

Philip Risdale, East Sussex

★ You wanted a mouse, you got one. Delayed reviews are a constant concern to us, but there is virtually nothing we can do about it. We can't review the software until we get it, and sometimes we don't get it until just before it hits the streets. Sorry, we try our best to review games before they come out, but the nature of the industry dictates that this is not always possible.

BAD SEX LIFE

Love the demos, the reviews and the mag. Rely on them in fact. Successfully bought several games on the strength of them. I was very interested in the demo and review of *Final Fantasy VIII*, though. I quote Dave Woods: "Expect to be gobsmacked by the visuals (which have been sharpened up...)" "The quality of the graphics (which are better than sex in places)."

Plugged in the demo. Gobsmacked I am - with knobs on. Was your reviewer just back from an assignation with his local dealer having overdone the free samples? Or is his sex life really that terrible? Either way, it's your responsibility as a caring employer to offer him therapy double quick time.

I mean. Pur-lease. The backgrounds have a visual clarity that made me wonder if I needed my cataracts seen to. I thought I'd started an unadvertised *Stingray* demo, as it looked like an underwater scene filmed near the sewage outlet of New York City.

There are more square edges to the outlines of the characters than there are in an architect's design for a 1970s council housing scheme. And the text - well I think it was text - Speccy retro or what? Just to top off this "immersive" experience - the music. Saints preserve us! It sounded like the annual primary school recorder concert. If you like grinding your teeth in agonised torment, buy this game now.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

MR HAPPY

I hope I am not the only one who gets annoyed about this subject... Why are we repeatedly asked by software companies to 'register' the software we buy? It's not as if we get anything useful for the act of sending in our personal details, is it? Most of the time we are simply making ourselves a target for junk mail, at best just from the software publisher and at worst from every direct contact company from here to Outer Mongolia.

Occasionally, the carrot of a 'Free Prize Draw' is dangled before us, and the 'National Lottery enthusiasm' kicks in and convinces us that we actually have a sporting chance of winning a holiday for two in the Seychelles, or a second-hand, coffee-stained mouse mat emblazoned with the publisher's logo. That is, if the draw exists at all (cynical? me?).

As far as I know most patches and updates are now available on the Net, and technical support can often be gained from the many forums and newsgroups around. So as there is really very little support that can be offered by them or asked for by us, I have to ask: what do the companies do with all the information that we give them? Answer: someone, somewhere is making BIG money buying and selling all this data. Does it really make any difference that you ticked the little box at the end of the small print, and did you interpret the double-negative question correctly? Regards, and keep up the great work with the mag!

Irfan Shaffi, London



★ In our experience registering games is a waste of time and energy. We ran a feature on this and hardly any of the publishers responded to our registration forms (we sent them anonymously), which makes it doubly annoying when they try to force you to register when you are installing their games, and remind you repeatedly of the benefits of registering when you load their game up. (Are you listening Interplay?) Any publishers reading this who feel this is unfair are welcome to write to me here and prove me wrong.

Oh, thanks by the way. My hard-earned shekels will live to see another day.

David J Dawson, via email

★ Given the slur on his (ahem) sex life, we only thought it was fair to throw this one over to Dave. He had this to say: "When I was talking about the graphics being better than sex, I was obviously referring to the amazingly

thunderous and earth-moving cut-scenes that left me gasping for breath. Not, I repeat, not, the Speccy retro dialogue boxes or porn-u-like music that accompanies the game. Now we've got that cleared up I would like to point out that I have tried sex. I got my head stuck and I'm not doing it again." ☹



Final Fantasy VIII better than sex? Nah.

Welcome to Septerra...



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PC CD ROM
Windows 98/95

TopWare
INTERACTIVE

VALKYRIE
STUDIOS





- ☛ **A fantasy role playing game with over 140 characters and a complex, multi-level world**
- ☛ **Rich and varied story-line**
- ☛ **Choose up to eight party members, each with unique skills, motivation and background**
- ☛ **The strategic combat system combines the best of turn-based and real time elements**
- ☛ **Create and cast up to 120 individual spells**
- ☛ **Explore over 200 locations with mysterious buildings, eerie landscapes and danger and surprise at every turn**



TOP STORY



An updated graphics engine, not that it was really needed.

WHAT LIES 'BEYOND THE FRONTIER'? JUST AN... **X-TENSION**

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Egosoft

PUBLISHER THQ

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Spring 2000

WEBSITE www.egosoft.com

IN SUMMARY

Elite-style trading, piracy, bounty hunting and exploration are offered in this pseudo-sequel to *X-Beyond The Frontier*. The engine has been given a graphical overhaul, the universe has been expanded and the linear plot removed entirely.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

The limitations of *X-BTF* are thrown out in favour of a free-form, open-ended universe. The gripes from the first game (factory control limitations, only one ship to control, not enough advancement) have all been addressed and fans are even invited to design their own quests in exchange for fame, prizes and women (or men).

Thought *X* was too short? So did the developer. Hence this open-ended, greatly expanded, *Elite*-style sequel...

★ **MOSTLY HARMLESS** Paul Presley

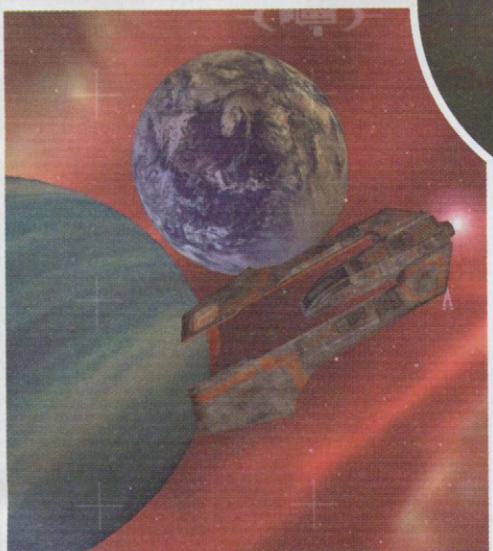
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You can partially remote control your own factories.



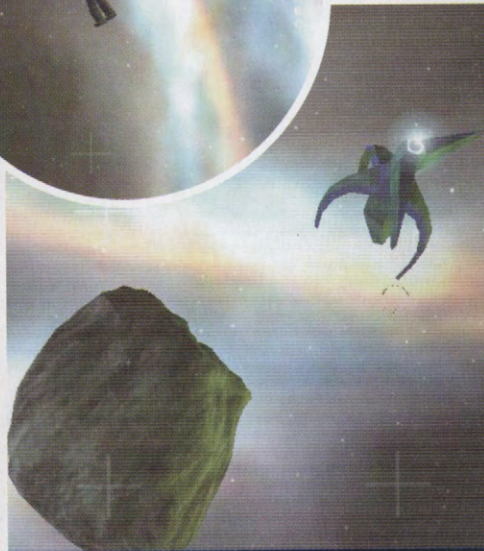
Swooping in to land.



The X Galaxy has been expanded.

"My God, it's
full of stars..."

Would-be pilots can look forward to new ships.



Something in the area of 500 missions will be created.



X-Tension... geddit? Extension. Oh, forget it!

Space may well be bigger than a very big thing after an eating binge, but it certainly isn't empty. While work continues apace on David Braben's *Elite* follow-up, and as space shoot 'em up after space shoot 'em up continue to flood the market, one title in particular is set to stand out from the crowd, following a promising, if short-lived, initial outing.

X-Beyond The Frontier has returned to the space trading genre with *X-Tension*, a semi-sequel that's done away with its linear plotline and limited expansion in favour of an open-ended universe. "The linear story we implemented in *X-BTF* was actually added rather late in the development," admits Bernd Lehahn, *X-Tension*'s lead designer. "We weren't too happy with this part of the game, and that's the reason we removed it completely from *X-Tension*. Our plan was, and still is, to make the most open and free game possible."

X's chief problem was that once the initial thrill of exploration and factory-owning died away, there really wasn't all that much left in the game. Obtaining large quantities of cash was too easily achieved, rendering the long-term appeal of the game virtually non-existent. *X-Tension* is attempting to rectify that, while retaining most of the initial game's engine and much-acclaimed playability.

"Fans are being invited to design and code missions for inclusion in the final release, with further missions being added with each subsequent patch"

In a bold move, the German developer, Egosoft, has not only listened to these criticisms, but allowed the fans to take an active role in solving them. As well as hundreds of mini-quests being handled in-house, fans are being invited to design and code their own missions for inclusion in the final release, with further missions being added with each subsequent patch.

"We want to get as many good quests as possible," explains Lehahn. "The web-based development is a new concept, and it probably causes more work for us than writing the missions ourselves, but we want to extend the idea and think it has great potential."

The *X* universe has been expanded in just about every way possible. "We are always listening closely to the feedback from our fans," reveals

"We want to supply a universe for the player to live in," says Lehahn.

Feedback and suggestions are still being encouraged (visit www.egosoft.com to find out more). Egosoft firmly believes in the idea that patches can offer more than just bug fixes. "This program will not end with the release of *X-Tension*," promises Lehahn.

Just as well, as it means Braben and co might finally have some real competition on their hands. [EF]

Lehahn, "and many of the ideas we read from our message board again and again are on our to-do list already."

These include the chance to buy and fly different ships, a bigger universe to explore, better factory controls that allow you to set specific cargo routes, remote piloting of any ship in the fleet, more diverse career options and better navigation controls.

Someone's
been watching
too much
Space 1999.



There will be more than ten different troop types to command, some more willing than others.

It's still to be decided whether troops can enter buildings or not, but considering the weapons on offer, there wouldn't be much point.

CALL OUT THE GUARDS! PRAETORIANS

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Pyro Studios

PUBLISHER Eidos

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE November

WEBSITE www.eidos.co.uk

IN SUMMARY

Command legions of burly men in short skirts in a series of attacks in and around the Ancient Roman Empire. Not much in the way of resource management, but plenty of strategic options with fortresses to take and hold. Make your own squad and formations, attack by land and sea and don't forget to take a few POWs while you're at it.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

By the makers of *Commandos*, so you can expect *Praetorians* to be the perfect mix of realism and fun. As well as being the most attractive looking game unearthed so far this year, it brings new features to 3D real-time strategy and throws away all the boring bits that have been done to death. It'll be brill. Trust us.

If you thought Asterix was a little twerp and Obelix needed to go to Weight Watchers, then don a shiny breast-plate and start oppressing

★ **WHEN IN ROME** Richie Shoemaker



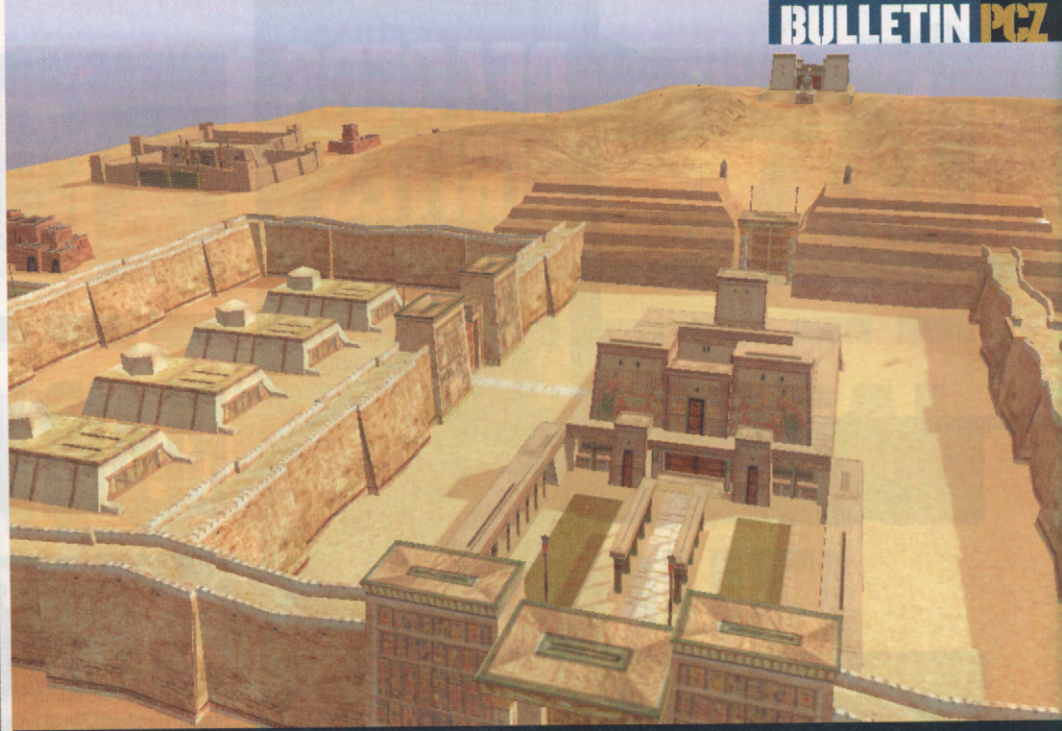
☺ If this is what Pyro can do with felt tips, you should see what they can do with a mouse.



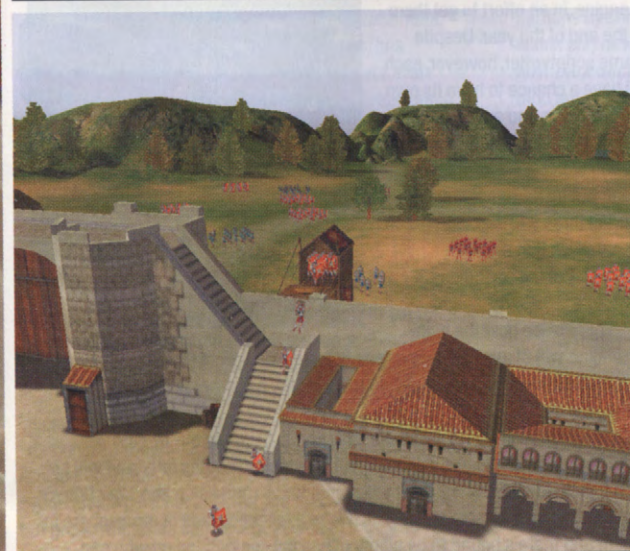
Friends, Romans, lend me your eyes.



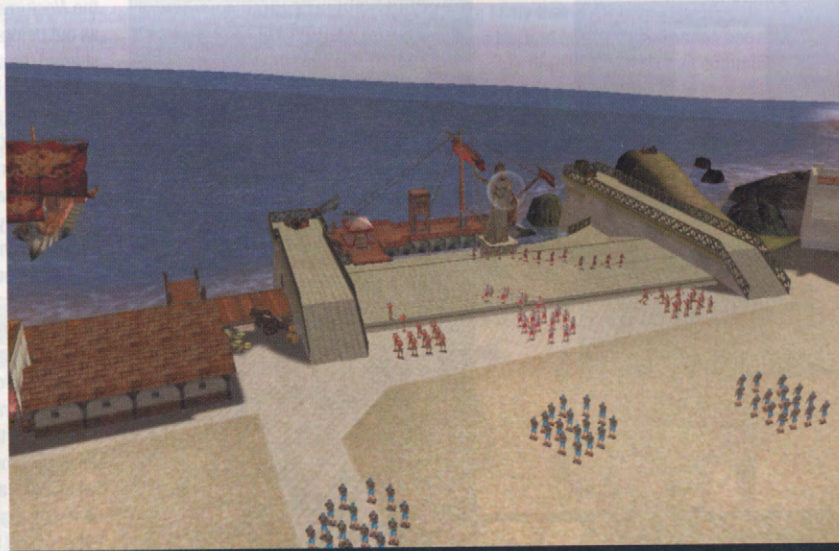
Troops can be changed into a variety of formations.



As well as rainy Northern France, missions will take place across the deserts of Egypt.



With troops manning the walls, you can imagine how the final game will look.



A Roman galley arrives on the scene.

The excesses of the ancient Romans are legendary – especially its leaders. Give any centurion several tables of meat and wine, surround them with small boys and you can bet that by the morning he would have devoured the lot and still be fresh-faced and ready for battle at the crack of dawn. Just as long as the local governor gets his taxes and the indigenous barbarians are kept at bay, a Roman commander could live in idyllic over-indulgence, indefinitely. Mess things up though, and it's off to the most desolate and uncultured place in the Empire – Britain.

As far as Roman provinces went, Spain was something of a safe seat. Neither desolate nor uncultured, Spain – or to be precise, Madrid – is also where Pyro Studios, the developers of *Praetorians*, work, rest and play. And rather than bless this sceptred isle, the company asked a load of journalists to

Madrid in order to cop a look at what it's been working on besides *Commandos 2*. We accepted.

Praetorians looks to the untrained eye like *Age Of Empires* would if it was in spin-o-rama 3D. In fact it looks better than *Age Of Empires* in fancy 3D. It looks better than almost any 3D strategy game you'd care to mention. Unlike *AOE* however, *Praetorians* is a man's strategy game; none of that

“*Praetorians* looks to the untrained eye like *Age Of Empires* would if it was in spin-or-rama 3D. In fact it looks better than *Age Of Empires* in fancy 3D”

sheep-farming, wood chopping girly stuff you get in other games, oh no. The only resources in *Praetorians* are of the fleshy variety: soldiers, slaves and horses. Find wild horses and you can train your infantry to ride them, take a few enemy prisoners and you can order them to ‘take point’ – very sharp points in uncomfortable places – or push your siege towers into

position up a fortress wall. In response, the enemy can even take your soldiers prisoner and put them to work as human shields, then you can liberate them, or let them rot if you like.

Mission-based, *Praetorians* starts in linear fashion with players in command of a small garrison of Romans on the edge of the Empire. As you progress and bump into new

civilisations, you can either stick with the Romans, or defect. The idea, as Pyro co-founder Javier Pérez explains, is: “To expand the single-player game to feel like a multiplayer game, but with a story linking the missions.”

Yet to be incorporated are the night-time missions. Traditionally, night missions in most games just mean more of the same, except darker.

In *Praetorians*, darkness is a whole new type of warfare, where giving soldiers torches can make them a target for a concealed archer, although, without light your troops may panic, especially if the enemy is skulking around waiting to slit a couple of throats.

With a good few months until its release, there is still a long way to go until the game is complete. What you can't see in these pictures is just how watchable the game is. All the soldiers are in 3D (unlike the forthcoming *Shogun: Total War*) and they are all superbly animated. Units within formation move realistically just out of sync. Centurions fan out and engage the enemy when disembarking from siege towers and war galleys, and walls even crumble realistically when hit with boulders. God knows what it'll look like when units find themselves under a downpour of boiling oil, but if what was on show in Madrid is anything to go by, it'll be spectacular. **PCZ**

READERS WRITES

NEWS EDITOR Richie Shoemaker



Quite frankly the thought of talking about operating systems bores me rigid, but

with Windows 2000 now on the shelves, no doubt some of you are wondering whether it is worth shelling out £120 on a CD-Writer so you can copy it off your mate. In a nutshell, the answer is no.

Microsoft is now trumpeting the arrival of Windows ME, or Windows Millennium Edition, which is basically a whizzed-up version of Windows 98 and promises plenty of built-in support for things that you'd like to have but can't afford; digital cameras, scanners, and the like. Windows ME is plug-and-play, Windows 2000 is plug-and-enter-some-data - an advanced version of Windows NT, basically. Generally, unless you own a multinational conglomerate and employ hundreds of thousand of people, you'd best give Windows 2000 a miss.

But what of Linux, the free operating system? What's it like? Personally, I have no idea. The thought of updating drivers sends me into a cold sweat, so god knows what I'd be like installing Linux. It is incredibly popular though, both in the office and at home, and game developers are seriously getting into it thanks to its stability and online community, so I think it's about time we took a look at it. We'll have a full report next issue.

Away from operating systems for a moment, I'd just like to mention a certain website which is certainly fun and definitely worth a visit. www.splog.co.uk is the PC ZONE readers' website, run by a bunch of readers, obviously. And it's great, obviously. The reason I'm telling you about it is twofold. Firstly, it has reviews and if we see anything that has come from the mind of a genius, we may ask them to write for us. Secondly, there is a prize for the person who can put www.splog.co.uk in the most public place. So do I win or what?

THE PCZONE CHARTS

What's in, out, up and down

P.25



chartTrack

TECH-HEAD

NVIDIA takes the industry by storm and WH Smith bins its boxes

P.26



BLAIR WITCH TRILOGY

We've finally got more details on the project that will bring *Blair Witch* to our humble PC screens. There will actually be three stand-alone games, or episodes, each developed by a different house and reconstructing the history behind the events in the film. TRI, Human Head and Ritual Entertainment will each be developing a title separately, using the *Nocturne* engine, in an effort to get them all out before the end of the year. Despite sharing the same scriptwriter, however, each developer will have a chance to have its own unique take on the myth, and every episode will feature different characters, weapons and monsters. You won't have to buy them all if you don't want, but as Human Head's Tim Gerritsen says: "All three will become part of a far-reaching narrative that provides a new interpretation on a lot of the mythology behind *Blair Witch*."

It'll be interesting to see how the high-tech *Nocturne* engine will fit in with the low-tech home movie feel of the film, although, that game's often stupid camera angles should recreate the hand-held camera experience rather well.

The first title to appear will be TRI's, also the only one to be set in the *Nocturne* universe, around 1941. Human Head's will come out a couple of months later and will be set in 1886, and finally Ritual Entertainment will continue the regression into *Blair Witch*'s past with a game set when it all started, in 1786. We're expecting loads of atmosphere in every one of them and there's bound to be plenty of healthy competition on who can make the scariest game. Considering that *Nocturne*, for all its flaws, remains one of the most frightening gaming experiences to be had on the PC, this could be a marriage made in heaven. Or, more appropriately, hell.

He's down a 'ole. In the dark. With an owl!



TREK ON THE NET

Publishing giant Activision, with the co-operation of Verant Interactive (makers of online RPG *EverQuest*), is hoping to release an online *Star Trek* game - 'massively multiplayer' of course - sometime before April 2002.

Already, both companies have pledged US\$4m to the project, with the aim to sign up 500,000 users within the first six months. What form the game will take is unknown, but



No screenshots on the first online *Trek* game yet, obviously.

with Verant currently king of the online RPG and with an online 3D real-time strategy game currently in development, either type of game is likely. We favour the former, an RPG where the aim is to rise through the ranks from cadet to starship captain, similarly if you want to be a Klingon. Wesley Crushers need not apply.

ONLINE DIARY

Showdown at the ZONE server

P.30



MAN WHO KNOWS

The very latest industry gossip

P.38



WHATEVER HAPPENED TO....?

Three games that should've been here by now

P.39



HOTSHOTS

Big games and even bigger pictures

P.40



PCZ

DARK DAYS FOR UNREAL TOURNAMENT SEQUEL

First-person action and space combat combine – online

Co-developers of *Unreal* and *Unreal Tournament*, Canadian code crew Digital Extremes, has announced its next project as *Dark Sector*, an online-only game that combines the first-person action of *Unreal Tournament* with space combat – all using an enhanced version of the *Tournament* 3D engine.

Played across the solar system, *Dark Sector* will be set in a future where human society is fragmented and anarchic. The authorities rely on civilians employed as mercenaries and bounty hunters to keep order, and it is in this role that new players will join the game. Later on, players can turn to assassination and piracy to get by.

Unlike current big online games, such as *EverQuest*, *Ultima Online* and *Asheron's Call*, *Dark Sector* will not feature traditional role-playing elements, the only stat to be concerned with is money, for it is money that buys you weapons, ammunition, equipment and spacecraft. Money is also important if you want to band together to form syndicates where not only will you find safety in numbers, but group members can pool their wealth if they so wish.

Set across stations and starbases, *Dark Sector's* first-person action sounds quite urban centric, with groups vying for control along with the economic benefits that come with it. Taking to the skies, where area control is perhaps more difficult, squadrons of fighters can engage in piracy, or ferry players for whatever fee they can get away with.

As with Microsoft's fantasy RPG *Asheron's Call*, *Dark Sector* will offer a constantly changing game world, with the developer keen to evolve the story within the game,

perhaps by shifting the balance of power or introducing aliens and new weapons. Users will also have a huge say in how *Dark Sector* develops, as Digital Extremes is keen for mod authors to contribute to ongoing development.

Currently only a few months into development, we have no idea as to when *Dark Sector* will be completed,

but it is quite likely that if the developer can find a way to combat the lag and combine fast action and depth, while at the same time build a sense of community, there's no doubt that *Dark Sector* could be a massive game. We shall keep a close eye on developments – you can be sure of that.



Some of the cast of *Dark Sector's* thousands, including a Wazza Christmas lookalike. But which one?

SIM-THING IN THE AIR

We knew that it was going to happen, but the speed with which sites dedicated to *The Sims* have sprung up is still quite impressive. It's inevitable that a game that recreates the minutiae of life for people who are too busy spending all day glued to their PC screens to experience it for themselves should spawn a massive online community. You download other people's houses and the sims living inside them, so that you can have your own sims socialise with them, and Maxis has started posting new objects (slot machines, cuckoo clocks...) and skins on their website. There are also plenty of tools on the site to help you create your own. As a result, you can download some very interesting skins – not officially sanctioned – such as Elvis,

Beavis and Butthead or Mr Garrison. If you fancy setting up shop you should pay a visit to the Mall Of The Sims, where there are dozens of stores dedicated to every accessory you can imagine. Looks as if *The Sims* future is assured.

- Official Maxis site: <http://www.thesims.com>
- Mall Of The Sims: www.synchroplay.com/mallofthesims/directory.html
- Simz Online: <http://simz.gamenation.com/>
- The Sims Resource: <http://sims.xtremesimz.com/index.html>
- There's also a crack floating about to remove the censorship blur when your sims have a shower or sit on the toilet – but you'll have to find that one yourself.



Meet Elvis Sim, Spiderman Sim and some of their mates.

SHORTS

WOLFENSTEIN CONFIRMED

Activision has announced what everybody already knew, that a sequel to the granddaddy of first-person shoot 'em ups, *Wolfenstein 3D*, is on the way. Powered by the mighty *Quake III Arena* engine, *Return To Castle Wolfenstein* has been in development for eight months at the studios of ex-Xatrix boys Gray Matter. Creator of the original *Wolfy*, id Software, is obviously taking a keen interest in the project.



EIDOS RACE AGAIN

Eidos recently dropped off preview code of *F1 World Grand Prix*, sequel to last year's *Official Formula 1 Racing*, which did rather well to get our recommended award. The new version boasts an official licence (what game doesn't these days?), 1999 season data, accurately modelled cars and a scenario mode. We should have a review for you next issue.



NO PEACE FOR TOTAL WAR

Creative Assembly's medieval real-time strategy and empire-building game *Shogun: Total War* has slipped a little, to May. However, the UK-based developer has said that when it's done, they'd like to expand the series to take in other conflicts. It would certainly make a change to see a decent American Civil War battle game that isn't tile-based, we say.

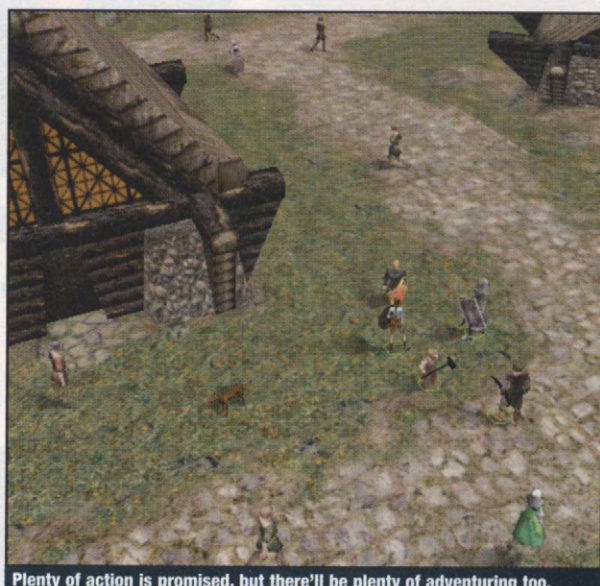


MONKEY'S GONE TO HEAVEN

Silicon Dreams' 3D real-time strategy game *Warmonkeys* is no more. Having been signed up to be released by Take 2, it shall henceforth be known as *Dogs Of War* – which is a shame because we rather prefer the original name. OK, so it's not quite a blunder in the same league as the Kellogg's Coco Pops scandal, but still...



The possible camera options are "unlimited".



Plenty of action is promised, but there'll be plenty of adventuring too.

TOTALLY ANNIHILATED

This is *Dungeon Siege* and it's the first game from Gas Powered Games, which is headed up by one Chris Taylor, the creator of *Total Annihilation* who left Cavedog's sinking ship way before anyone knew it was sinking.

Curiously, *Dungeon Siege* is being touted as a "3D action RPG adventure" – which tells us nothing. The details that do exist reveal that unlike most 3D real-time strategy games, *Dungeon Siege* will offer a seamless world over which you can command your fantasy troops – no breaks in the action to watch video while the next level is loaded up.

Like Blizzard's *Warcraft III*, *Dungeon Siege* is likely to centre on small-scale battles between dozens of troops rather than hundreds. Character development will also be high on the list of priorities, as will storyline and interaction. Characters can be sent all over, which should make for serious adventuring.

Chris Taylor says that *Dungeon Siege* will take both RPG and real-time strategy in a new direction. Coming from the man who brought us *Total Annihilation*, who are we to doubt him?



SWAT 3 READIES FOR ONLINE ACTION

Sierra Studios has officially announced the first add-on pack for *SWAT 3* and, as promised, it will finally bring multiplayer action to what is considered one of the finest tactical shooters on the market.

Out in the Autumn, *SWAT 3: Battle Plan* will offer six new missions for single and multiplayer games, the option to play the original maps in multiplayer mode and a level and model editor.

Three multiplayer modes are promised: traditional team and free-for-all deathmatches, co-operative missions and competitive

missions, where each human player has AI-controlled bots under their command.

Finally, for the gun fetishists among you, *Battle Plan* will ship with a bunch of new weapons, each of which can be customised with new stocks (walnut or forest, sir?), suppressors, sights and various other gun bunting.

For those too tight to splash out the 20 or so quid to play *SWAT 3* against other humans, Sierra will release a free patch that will allow gamers to play the original 16 missions in the various multiplayer flavours.



Players will be able to customise uniforms and weapons before battle.



"Oi! You're in my seat!"

DESERT ISLAND CDS

If Brett Sperry, co-founder and president of Westwood, was stranded on a desert island with only a PC, an unlimited power supply and five games, which would he choose?



- ★ CIVILIZATION (Hasbro)
- ★ DESCENT (Interplay)
- ★ EVERQUEST (Verant)*
- ★ C&C: RED ALERT (EA)
- ★ ULTIMA III (EA)

*choice if allowed only one game

Comment

"To be honest, stranded on a deserted island sounds kind of nice. No more deadlines! I could cruise the Internet, go diving, and do a little sun bathing with a margarita in hand. Ahhhh.

"Choosing five games to take with me is difficult, but my favourite would have to be *Everquest* – because I'm so highly addicted to it. I might go into a comatose state of withdrawal for not playing my character within a 12-hour time frame. Damn Verant, where's *Kunark*?" (*Everquest* expansion – Ed)



GAMES FOR FREE

Rat Attack, free on PC.



Pure Entertainment gives it all away

London-based developer Pure Entertainment has decided to port its PlayStation and N64 hit *Rat Attack* over to the PC. What's more, the company also plans to give it away free on the Internet along with a bunch of other full titles. The only cost to visitors to the site (www.freeloader.com) is the price of the phone call to download the files.

Download times are obviously a worry, especially with most games weighing in at well over 100Mb – it could take many hours to download a typical game. On the Freeloader site however, games will be split up into easily downloadable sizes, with visitors able to download a game level by level if they so desire. One

game that should be available by the 1 May launch date is *Grand Theft Auto*, which will have the music taken out and will be split into four files: the core data and the three cities.

Having just signed a deal with Take 2 to raid its back catalogue, Pure promises a regular release of original and unpublished games – some of which will have featured in these pages over past months. In all, over 50 free games should be available within a few months.

Entirely funded by advertising, Freeloader is sure to attract a massive number of gamers. Whether Pure can keep it up, with decent quality games appearing on a regular basis, is another matter. Let's hope so.



With games such as *GTA* being made freely available, Freeloader could seriously upset the budget games market.



Pure Entertainment has struck a deal with Take 2.

SHORTS

CHASE ME

Slovakian developer Cauldron (currently working on *Battle Isle IV* for Blue Byte) has announced *Chaser*, a first-person action game that aims to immerse players in a deep and involving single-player storyline. Set in the near future, you're cast as a security officer, wounded and on the run. No surprises as to the aim of the game: to find out what the hell is going on. Nice engine though.

SHIPBUILDING

Simon & Schuster plans to release *Star Trek: Starship Creator – Warp 2* next month. The game allows trekkies to



design their own ships and pilot them in ten missions. New to this version is a scenario editor and the ability to import pictures. Customised ships will also be able to be imported into Simon & Schuster's forthcoming action adventure *Star Trek: Dominion Wars*.

GRANDPA TURISMO



Stairlift Racer used proper motion-capture techniques, as does SagaSoft's latest.

SagaSoft is developing a driving game loosely based on the Oscar-winning film *Driving Miss Daisy*. Set in suburban England, the as-yet unnamed game casts you as a rookie driver employed by a doddering and reclusive spinster, where the aim is to take the old dear wherever she wants to go, be it to the post office, the bingo or the homes of her relatives. Over 25 missions are planned, each with a time limit. However, go over 6mph, and you're sacked.

Using an updated version of SagaSoft's *Stairlift Racer* graphics engine, Saga is still hoping to acquire the official *Driving Miss Daisy* licence, even though the game is near completion and is likely to hit the shelves April 1. *Bus Pass Extreme*, SagaSoft's first-person beat 'em up, has been canned.

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Encyclopedia



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the World 2.0



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Game



Art Attack -
Creativity



Compton's 3D
World Atlas

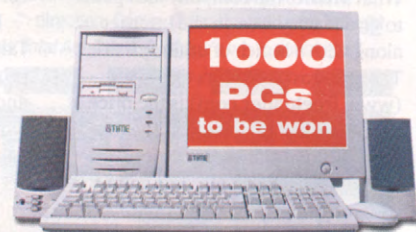


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Racing Game

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supanet has teamed up with Time Computers to offer 1000 PC prizes for users of supanet. Up to 50 PC winners will be announced every week for the first 5 months of the year 2000. Full details on the supanet website.



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- B - Pick up a supanet CD** from any branch of Time Computers, Courts, Powerhouse, Choices Video or the PocketPhone Shop. Simply follow the instructions on the CD.
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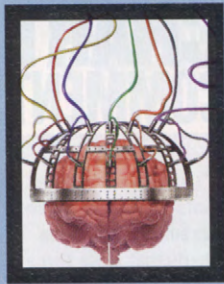
the PocketPhone Shop

choices
VIDEO

COURTS

TIME
education

See www.supanet.com website for full details and terms and conditions of PC competition and supaschools promotion. This offer is valid for new supanet registrations after the 10th of January 2000. Offer limited to one free software title per household. Software supplied on CDs with on-line documentation. Pack shots shown for illustration only. Please allow 28 days for delivery. Calls charged by your telecom provider, local rate for Internet, national rate for support. supanet Ltd. The Globe Centre, St. James Square, Accrington, Lancs. BB5 0RE.



TECH HEAD

NVIDIA release an ambitious roadmap, while WH Smith burn PC titles in-store

★ **FEELING THE HEAT** Carlos Ruiz

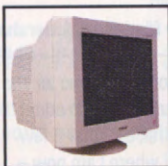
FACTCANNON

★ Intel and AMD processor prices dropped dramatically in late January, with some real bargains appearing. The 'Coppermine' Pentium III 533EB, with a 133MHz bus speed and 256K of full speed cache, is now just £175. Meanwhile, the 650MHz Athlon (with its 200MHz bus speed) enjoyed the biggest price cut, down from £400 to £225. Stay tuned until next month, when we look at the best motherboards to accommodate the latest CPUs.

★ The new SideWinder Plug & Play Game Pad from Microsoft (www.microsoft.com) certainly looks the part, but there's really nothing much to get excited about. It seems to have a rather limited selection of buttons and functions, and while USB connectivity is very handy, it's pretty standard these days. The shape seems to be similar to the original SideWinder Game Pad, so it should score highly for comfort – but our judgement will have to be reserved until we get our mitts on one.



★ Sony (www.sony.com) has one of the best reputations when it comes to PC monitors, and the latest G500 Trinitron certainly isn't going to tarnish it. The monster 21inch diagonal is virtually flat, blessed with a pin-sharp 0.24mm aperture grill and has low reflection levels. Picture quality is outstanding, so eyestrain won't be a problem – although, your bank balance may need time to recover from the £900 deficit.



NVIDIA'S VISION

The leader in graphics technology plans to take the industry by storm

In the fast moving graphics card market, it's better to be safe than sorry – and although NVIDIA (www.nvidia.com) currently enjoys a dominant position, it has no intention of slipping up. The revolutionary GeForce 256 has only been available for a few months, but details of two forthcoming chipsets are already emerging. This information comes not from speculation, but from NVIDIA's official roadmap, which documents how it intends to release a new breakthrough product every six months.

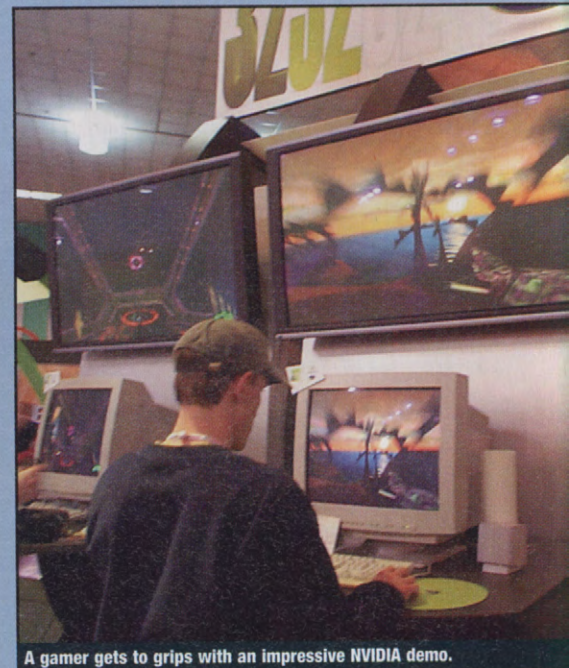
When the GeForce 256 was in development, it was succinctly codenamed 'NV10'. The two new chipsets will be known as NV11 and NV15 until just before their release in the second quarter of 2000, when they are expected to adopt a title based around the same GeForce branding (GeForce 512 and 1024, anyone?).

Following on in the same vein as their predecessor, the new chipsets will take hardware Transform & Lighting acceleration to new levels with more powerful CPUs. They will also be manufactured in a '0.18' micron process, enabling lower heat consumption and a 33 per cent faster core clock speed of 160MHz.

Features such as AGP4x with Fast Writes, Cube Environment Mapping, DirectX texture compression and DVD/HDTV playback are often eclipsed by the T&L capabilities, but each of these is still present and correct. Other key features may well be added to the already impressive spec sheet, and it is almost certain that some kind of dual display mechanism will be available as an option for manufacturers to implement.

The GeForce 256 has two pixel-rendering pipelines, each of which can texture one pixel in each pass. The NV11

will also have two pipelines, while the NV15 will go even better with four. A key architectural improvement, however, is that both new chipsets will include the ability for each pipeline to texture not one, but two pixels in each pass. Multitexturing will be much faster as a result, which is good when you consider that most games use it.



A gamer gets to grips with an impressive NVIDIA demo.

BOX UP, BOX OUT

Buying boxed games off-the-shelf could soon be a thing of the past if WH Smith has its way

WH Smith (www.whsmith.co.uk) has been piloting a new software purchasing system in its Bluewater and Brent Cross stores. As an alternative to the standard practice of buying a boxed game off the shelf, you can select it from a computerised menu and have it copied onto a recordable CD while you wait.

After the 'burning' is complete, the disc is labelled and placed in a jewel case. You

then grab the appropriate manual and pay for everything at the counter. The idea is certainly innovative enough, but the jury is still out on whether it will be a success.

Unless it means a few quid can be knocked off the price of games (which at the moment it doesn't), it is doubtful whether there is any future in selling games this way. Even though it is a strong possibility, due to the savings on packaging

and duplication, we've yet to hear whether the popularity of the scheme would lead to discounts on the latest titles.

The obvious advantages, however, are that you get more choice, and all the titles are in stock. Vending systems could even evolve, which would be able to show video footage of each game, with a database of information and reviews. It could also mean that, eventually, there won't be any games

stacked up on shelves at all – just rows of machines, like an arcade.

Of course, the Internet will probably be able to satisfy most of our gaming needs in a few years time. E-commerce is starting to take off in a big way, and when high-speed connections are brought to the masses next year, buying and downloading games should become a viable option for gamers around the world. More on this, next issue....

CHARTS

All you need to know about which games are selling by the shedload, plus the buzz on the streets – where you tell us what *you* think

THE megastores TOP 10

FEB	MAR	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	REV SCORE
NE 1		THE SIMS	MAXIS	EA	86%
3	2	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER: SEASON 99/00	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	92%
RE	3	HALF-LIFE	VALVE	SIERRA	95%
1	4	HALF-LIFE: OPPOSING FORCE	GEARBOX	SIERRA	85%
NE	5	DELTA FORCE 2	NOVALOGIC	NOVALOGIC	63%
4	6	QUAKE III ARENA	ID SOFTWARE	ACTIVISION	89%
5	7	SWAT 3: CLOSE QUARTERS BATTLE	SIERRA STUDIOS	SIERRA	89%
RE	8	UNREAL TOURNAMENT	EPIC/DIGITAL EXTREMES	GT INTERACTIVE	90%
6	9	AGE OF EMPIRES II: THE AGE OF KINGS	ENSEMBLE STUDIOS	MICROSOFT	90%
10	10	THEME PARK WORLD	BULLFROG	EA	70%

THE TOP 10

JAN	FEB	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SCORE
NE	1	THE SIMS	MAXIS	EA	86%
NE	2	DELTA FORCE 2	NOVALOGIC	NOVALOGIC	63%
1	3	CHAMP MANAGER: SEASON 99/00	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	92%
2	4	AGE OF EMPIRES II: THE AGE OF KINGS	ENSEMBLE STUDIOS	MICROSOFT	90%
NE	5	TOY STORY 2	3DO	3DO	55%
RE	6	HIDDEN & DANGEROUS	ILLUSION	SOFTWAREWORKS	91%
4	7	QUAKE III ARENA	ID SOFTWARE	ACTIVISION	89%
NE	8	AIRPORT INC	KRISALIS	TAKE 2	37%
7	9	UNREAL TOURNAMENT	EPIC/DIGITAL EXTREMES	GT INTERACTIVE	90%
10	10	COMMAND & CONQUER: TIBERIAN SUN	WESTWOOD	EA	90%

(Compiled by Chart Track © ELSPA 2000)

WIN THE ENTIRE VIRGIN TOP 10!

PC ZONE and Virgin have teamed up to give you the chance to win every game in the current Top 10. All you have to do to enter the draw is answer this simple question:

Question: Who is the legendary creator of *The Sims*?

Just answer the above question and send it on a postcard, along with with *all* the information requested, to the address below

Name / Address / Postcode / Daytime phone number / Email / Job title / Company name / Age if under 18

Please tell us if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies

Are you a current subscriber to PC ZONE?

Answers on a postcard to: PC ZONE Chart Compo (CPCZ001A), Dennis Publishing, PO Box 154, Bradford BD1 5RZ. Closing date: Thursday 6 April

Terms and conditions: Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The Ed's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply. Capisce?



It's the *Little Computer People* all over again.

CHART COMMENT

BASED ON CHART TRACK TOP 10

It's kind of spooky that *Delta Force 2* occupies the same place in the charts that *Delta Force* did exactly one year ago. Considering we gave both games the same score, I wonder whether NovaLogic has foisted almost exactly the same game upon us and slapped a big red number 2 on the box. That said, I have to admit to being a bit partial to the odd online multiplayer session. Why else people would be buying the game is something of a mystery.

Sadly, it seems the PC games market is going the way of the consoles, with too many big releases being rushed out for Christmas, leaving the rubbish for the new year and giving it a decent chart placing by default. *Airport Inc* has to be one of the worst games to pierce the Top Ten in recent memory. Let's hope things improve next month.

Richie Shoemaker

THE BUZZ ON THE STREETS

"In a month filled with sequels, it's good to see that a truly original title rules the roost. Bar the odd dud (*Airport Inc*, *Toy Story 2*), it's quite a strong field, but if some of the bigger titles hadn't been delayed, it would have been even stronger.

The Frew, Middlesbrough

"*Airport Inc*? I demand to know who buys these games so we can round them back up and send 'em back to the Isle of Man."

Andy Monahan, Amersham

"I'm glad to see such an original game as *The Sims* at the top of the charts. I have to admit that I didn't like the game at first, but after a few hours it grew on me, until where I am now – totally hooked! It's also good to see *Age Of Empires II* doing so well. It's a great game, and also *H&D*, but there are still some bugs. Take 2, are you listening!?"

Gareth Brierley, Manchester

"At last, an original game tops the Chart. *The Sims* is fabulous, free-wheeling entertainment and a huge step forward for PC games. I hope other developers take note and realise that, if a game's good enough, sheer novelty takes precedence over existing, done-to-death franchises and genres. You can hope, can't you?"

Chris Howarth, Hull

"*Delta Force 2* at Number 2? It's shite. If you ask me the best tactical sim around is *Counter-Strike*. It's got more weapons, more features, excellent gameplay and loads more teamplay, and it's free... (On this month's CD – Ed).

Eoin O'Keeffe, Co Cork, Ireland

RETRO CHARTS

1 YEAR AGO...

- 1 Sim City 3000 (EA)
- 2 Delta Force (NovaLogic)
- 3 Half-Life (Sierra)
- 4 Baldur's Gate (Interplay)
- 5 Worms Armageddon (Hasbro)

2 YEARS AGO...

- 1 Tomb Raider II (Eidos)
- 2 Quake II (Activision)
- 3 FIFA: Road To World Cup 98 (EA)
- 4 Championship Manager 97/98 (Eidos)
- 5 Grand Theft Auto (BMG)

5 YEARS AGO...

- 1 Innocent Until Caught (Psygnosis)
- 2 Microcosm (Psygnosis)
- 3 Wing Commander III (EA)
- 4 Doom 2 (Virgin)
- 5 Magic Carpet (EA)

COMPETITION

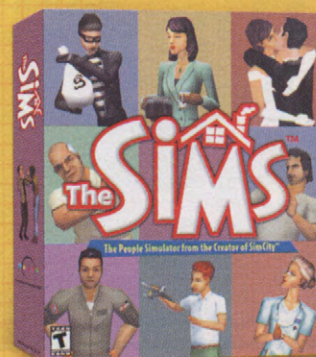
Raise a family...



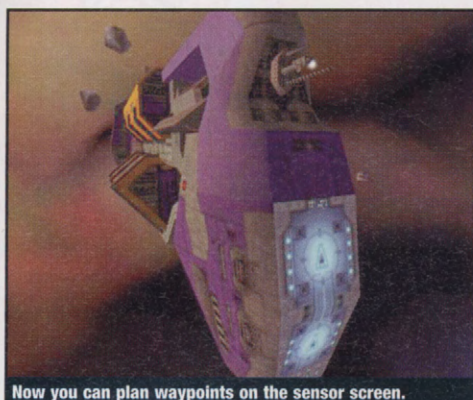
...or raze a family!

The new game from the creator of SimCity.™

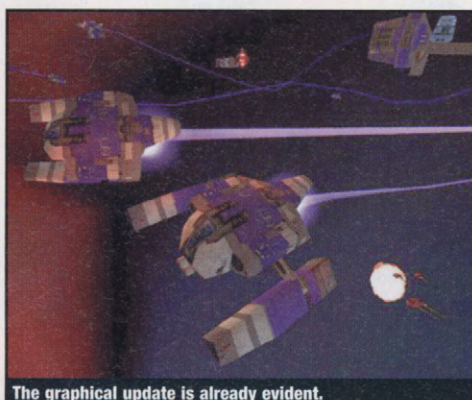
It's the ultimate test of your people skills as you create an entire neighborhood of simulated residents and run — or ruin — their lives. Design hundreds of Sims with their own unique personalities, selecting everything from the look of their faces to the clothes on their backs. Then build them anything from an estate to an eyesore. Let them live life in the fast lane or pursue a life of crime. Watch them party like swinging singles or make them get married and raise a family. Help your Sims find success — or watch them self-destruct. Whether they end up prosperous or pathetic is up to you. Once you're introduced to The Sims your world will never be the same.



Meet The Sims at www.TheSims.com



Now you can plan waypoints on the sensor screen.



The graphical update is already evident.



Expect new ship classes and designs.

HOMEWORLD STRIKES BACK

Space is the only place to be if you want to sample *Cataclysm*

Sierra's 3D real-time strategy game *Homeworld* is getting a sequel, of sorts, in the form of *Homeworld: Cataclysm*. Out in the summer, *Cataclysm* is set a century on from the original game and there's a new enemy to contend with called The Beast – it's a living machine of evil intent.

Controlling the destiny of one of *Homeworld*'s lower sects, the game will feature 17 new missions

and an updated multiplayer game that will allow up to eight players to slug it out online with two new fleets. Research trees will be expanded and the interface streamlined, and the mothership is now able to be built upon with extra bays and research craft. A new class of ships will also be introduced, including ships that can fool the enemy into thinking they are asteroids or friendly craft, as well as

spacecraft that can join up to form a bigger, more powerful ship – *Power Rangers*-style.

Relic, developer of the original *Homeworld*, has passed the reigns over to Barking Dog Studios, while it no doubt works on *Homeworld 2*. However, Barking Dog is no small outfit, having been responsible for what is perhaps the greatest total conversion for *Half-Life* – *Counter-Strike*.

ALLIED CARPET BOMBING



There are 14 WWII fighters to fly, with power-ups and extra weapons.

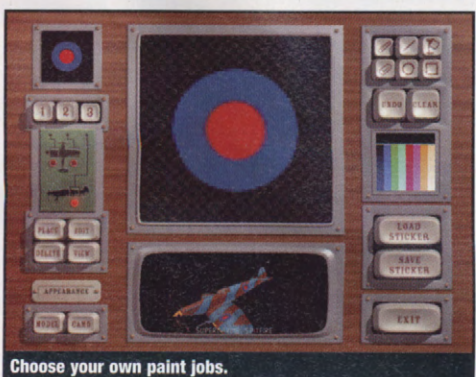
'Looks like it's curtains for us.'

Burning plastic soldiers, trying to get Action Man to cop off with Sindy's sister and building model aircraft and throwing them at the wall – all typical pastimes of the prepubescent male, circa 1977 – the latter of which is being made into a computer game called *Airfix Dogfighter* from Swedish developer UDS.

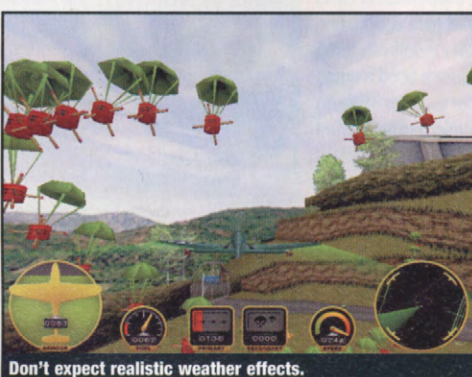
Although featuring accurately modeled aircraft from WWII, the planes

themselves have been significantly scaled down so that they can be flown about a 14-room house. In single-player mode the game will be mission-based, with boats to sink in the bathroom and bombers to escort into the bedroom. In multiplayer mode players will be able to fight head-to-head or in teams, with the option to move the furniture around, or add a few houseplants, beforehand.

No publisher has yet been signed up for *Airfix Dogfighter*, but we are told it should be out in the Summer.



Choose your own paint jobs.



Don't expect realistic weather effects.



'You broke a plate. I'm telling mum.'



'Give us a kiss then.'

INSANE IS THE GAME

Start your engines and get ready for some action

Following the success of alternative racers *Midtown Madness* and *Carmageddon*, Codemasters is gearing up to release one of its own. Specially designed for Internet and LAN play, *Insane* is set to feature plenty of 4x4 off-road racing fun, in anything from a normal off-roader, to a selection of military vehicles.

Instead of driving around predetermined tracks, *Insane* will offer total freedom in each race. This will allow you to knock seconds off each circuit by taking shortcuts. There will be several modes of play, including a Capture the Flag option, which could reproduce the kind of manic action seen in the cops and robbers multiplayer *Midtown Madness*. Another way to play, which sounds like it could be particularly fun is the Soccer mode, where crunching tackles could take on a whole new meaning. Along with the usual array of racing options, there will be some more unorthodox features, such as herds of buffalo stampeding across your path mid race.

It all sounds like loads of fun, and early screen shots do look pretty impressive. What's more, with the game leaning more towards Internet play than single-player, we could soon see the gaming world going mad for *Insane*.



'Can't we all just get along?'



Ready Brek, now in three colours



Localised damage effects will show you just how bad a driver you really are.



Less orthodox gaming features include stampeding herds of buffalo.

ALIENS DOUBLE BILL

First it was on, then it was off – Fox Interactive's PC game based on events in the most recent *Alien* film, *Aliens Resurrection*. The latest news is that the game is still in development, and rather than being the *Resident Evil*-style adventure we were expecting (considering a PlayStation version is also on the way), we've since been told the game will be a first-person game, no doubt to cash in on the success of *Aliens Vs Predator*. It's also likely that plenty of goo and blood is on the cards, as are a few scares – if and when it arrives.

Before *Resurrection*, however, we can expect *Aliens Vs Predator Gold Edition*, the expanded version of last year's top notch shoot 'em up, which is promised for the Spring.

Nine new levels, plus new weapons and multiplayer enhancements are set to make up the bulk of the expansion, with US customers also getting *Prima's Official Strategy Guide* thrown in for free. How much the special edition will go for over here is still not known, or whether indeed we'll actually get a fat book of tips.



Excuse me, but someone seems to have super-glued our cars together.

coming to your screen from March 17th . . .

ONLINE SPECIAL

THE LOWDOWN ON HOW TO HOOK UP TO THE NEW PC ZONE NINJA SERVER

INTERNET SOLDIER Phil Wand

SHOWDOWN AT THE ZONE SERVER

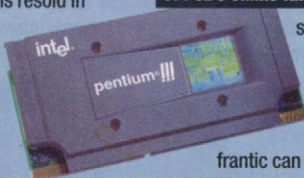
You want to hurt us? Then come on, what are you waiting for? Have a go if you think you're hard enough...

Look, don't try and hide it. We know you hate us and want us dead. We know you'd like us all shot, gutted, and the glue from our internal organs resold in buckets as wallpaper paste. So hey, we thought, it's only fair – why not give you the chance?

Yes folks, PC ZONE has gone and bought you the biggest, fastest, most offensive piece of PC hardware known to man. What's more, we've installed a bunch of the best games, and now we've plugged it into a big, live Internet feed. What this means is that anyone who thinks they're hard enough is now able to update their Internet server lists (see panel, 'Where To Find Games') and then jump on and join us for a blast out in the ether. All you need is a dial-up Internet account, a phone line and a modem.

Currently the PCZ machine is ticking over, running *Half-Life* and *Team Fortress Classic* servers. Behind the

Intel's supermunguous Pentium III is at the heart of PCZ's online fun.



scenes we're busy browsing, testing and cataloguing third-party maps, meaning you should be able to vote for your favourite play area and then have the chance of playing it with like-minded gamers.

Those of you who prefer your action just that little bit faster and more frantic can expect support for *Unreal Tournament*, our current fave online game, together with *Quake III Arena* within the next few weeks.

ALL ABOUT THE SERVER

The engine behind all the fun consists of dual 500MHz Intel Pentium III processors, 512Mb RAM and over 20Gb of hard disk space. But before you go getting excited about a twin chip setup on your home machine, remember that neither *Windows 95* or *Windows 98* support them – you'll have to

go and buy *Windows 2000* or migrate to *Windows NT* before you'll gain anything from a second CPU.

On the subject of operating systems, much time was spent deliberating the relative merits of Microsoft *Windows NT 4.0* and *Linux*. In the end, and despite numerous protestations, it was decided that a stable kernel of *Slackware Linux* was the best option. What's more, it's also free. And with many of the top developers now publishing *Linux* versions of their game code – *Unreal Tournament*, *Quake III* and *Half-Life* included – it seemed silly not to take advantage of *Linux*'s inherent stability.

On the PC ZONE box, if the server application dies, a management process kicks in and restarts it. Other useful tools include a unique voting system, allowing players to cast a democratic vote on the next map, and a graphical front-end that keeps an eye on what's happening in the game.

HOW TO FIND US

WHERE TO FIND GAMES

If you're not using a server finder tool, such as *PingTool* or *GameSpy 3D*, you're making things hard for yourself. But many of the latest titles have adequate Internet features and should allow you to get connected with little fuss. Just look for PC ZONE in the title of the server and get ready to die.

UNREAL TOURNAMENT



Click on the 'Find Internet Games' option from the 'Multiplayer' menu. You should read the 'News' section to see if there are any new game patches available. Now, click on the 'UTServers' tab and the list should begin to populate. Trouble is, it has to populate this growing list each and every time you fire up the game, so do think about using *PingTool*...

QUAKE III ARENA*



Choose the 'Multiplayer' option from the main menu. Instantly you'll see a long list of available Arena servers. But like *Unreal Tournament*, the ever-increasing list takes a fair time to fill up and then has the audacity to empty itself each time you quit.

HALF-LIFE*



Select 'Multiplayer' from the main menu and then select 'Internet

games'. Press the 'Update' button to download the latest list of active servers. Note that all server variations (eg *Team Fortress Classic*, *Counter-Strike*) will require you to have the appropriate mod installed. To install a mod, go back to the main menu and select 'Custom Game'.

TEAM FORTRESS CLASSIC*



Instructions are the same as the ones for *Half-Life*. Go to the 'Internet' menu from Multiplayer and look for all games flagged as 'TFC'. If you haven't got your *Team Fortress Classic* mod active, don't worry. Unlike other games that seem to want to make your online time a nightmare, *Half-Life* is intelligent enough to swap over the moment you click on a TFC server.

STARSIEGE: TRIBES



Click 'Play Game' from the main menu then set up your character (previous definitions should be available from a drop-down menu in the top left-hand corner). Click 'Next' and then make sure the 'Join Multiplayer' box is checked. Click 'Next' again and, hey presto, a long list of *Starsiege: Tribes* servers appears. Tribes was actually one of the first games to make it easy to get online and, like *Half-Life*, the details are retained for your next gaming session; the game will automatically refresh them to make sure you're not looking at stale data.

* Games currently playing on the PC ZONE server. More information available at www.sillyware.com/pcz

WHAT'S ON AT GAMEPLAY

WIREPLAY 3 BETA

Head on over to the [Gameplayz](http://www.gameplayz.com) website at www.gameplayz.com to register for the Wireplay Beta programme.

LESS LAG The technical boffins have recently been testing new launch code which should fix problems with stability and dropouts. Initially testing on *Age Of Empires II*, it should be applied to other titles if successful.

COMMUNITY There's a brand new SAS skin available for the distressingly popular *Counter-Strike* mod. The mod itself is on this month's CD. All at www.gameplay.com/wireplay

Wireplay
now at
gameplay.com



gameplay.com
we're never beaten

Online Diary is sponsored
by gameplay.com

WARLORDS IN SPACE

Next up from the Aussie creators of the *Warlords* series of turn-based strategy games is *Reach For The Stars*, a remake of the 1983 game that made the company's name way before *Warlords* was even thought of.

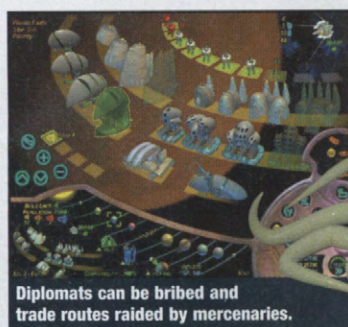
Rather than going the route of the recently released 3D effort *Imperium Galactica II*, *Reach For The Stars* remains a 2D game, turn-based and deeper than the voids across which it is based.

Like all space-based empire-building games, *Reach For The Stars* offers you the position of supreme leader of an alien civilisation (in this case there will be 13 to choose from). The aim is to lead your people to galactic domination by researching new technologies, spying, trading and war.

With players able to design their own ships, along with a scenario designer and simultaneous turn-based multiplayer games, *Reach For The Stars* should make for one of the most involving games of recent years.



Any game from the makers of *Warlords* is worth keeping an eye on.



Diplomats can be bribed and trade routes raided by mercenaries.

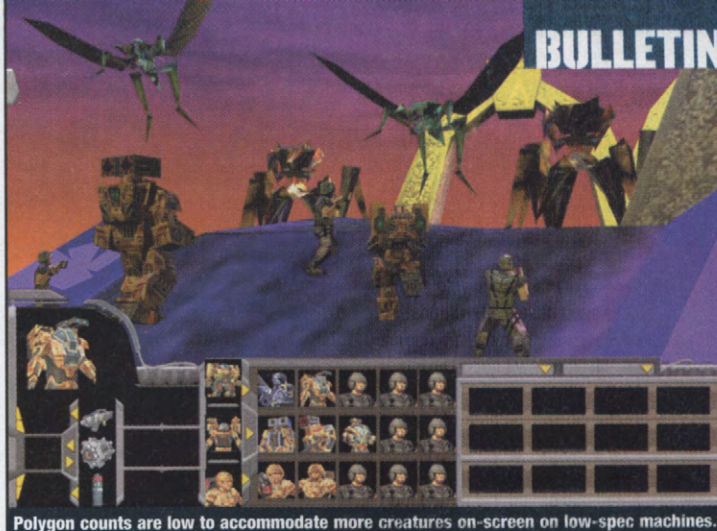


A charming Aussie creation.

OUR MOST WANTED

As *Black & White* gets closer to completion, the more we look forward to it – even though we haven't quite grasped what it's all about. We should also get a review copy of *Vampire* next issue and we can't wait to get our teeth into it

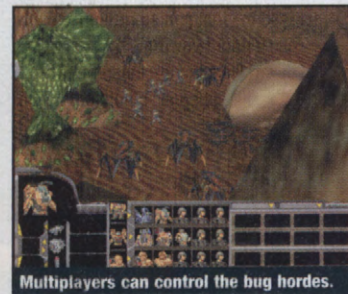
1	Black & White (Lionhead/EA)	May
2	Vampire: The Masquerade Redemption (Nihilistic/Activision)	May
3	Star Trek: Voyager – Elite Force (Raven/Activision)	TBC
4	Deux Ex (Ion Storm/Eidos)	May
5	Team Fortress II (Valve/Sierra)	Late 2000
6	Duke Nukem Forever (3D Realms/Infogrames)	Summer
7	Freelancer (Digital Anvil/Microsoft)	Late 2000
8	Star Wars: Obi Wan – (LucasArts/Activision)	Christmas 2000
9	Commandos 2 (Pyro/Eidos)	November
10	Shogun: Total War (Creative Assembly/EA)	May



Polygon counts are low to accommodate more creatures on-screen on low-spec machines.



As the game progresses, new technology will become available to the player, like powered armour and bio weapons.



Multiplayers can control the bug hordes.

STARSHIP TROOPERS IS BACK

Do you want to know more?

We lost our hearts to *Starship Troopers* in the summer of 1997 when Paul Verhoeven's sardonic sci-fi action flick burst onto cinema screens. The game was due to be released the following year by MicroProse. Then Hasbro brought MicroProse and the only word on the *Starship Troopers* game was that it had been canned. Now the game has been brought back to life and should be with us by Autumn.

Originally a third-person action strategy game, *Starship Troopers* is now a 3D real-time strategy affair – it's action-packed though – with a dynamic camera that

allows players to zoom in on the action, and with hundreds of alien bugs crowding the screen, *Starship Troopers* should be a game that's as good to watch as it is to play.

Set just after events in the film, you are put in command of a squad of crack Mobile Infantry troopers, headed by a Captain and three Lieutenants. As troopers survive engagements with the bug hordes, they will gain in rank and experience, and the recently departed will be replaced by rookies, guaranteeing plenty of death on both sides. No word yet, though, on whether Michael Ironside will revive his role as the bionic schoolteacher from hell.



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PC
CD
ROM

IT'S JUST CRICKET

Another EA game with 2000 on the end

Good cricket games are a rare old commodity, coming around about as often as an England Test victory. The last such game of any note was Codemaster's *Brian Lara Cricket* (PCZ #75), since which a year has passed. Now EA are planning to hit all opposition (as scant as it is) for six, with *Cricket 2000*.

HOWZAT!

Based on last year's World Cup tournament, you will have the option to play either a limited over one day game, or the World Cup itself. All of the features from last year's game will be present, including the actual teams,

"It boasts 'better than TV presentation', with Richie Benaud and David Gower in the commentary box"

players and stadiums, with each team member having their own ratings, accurately reflecting their real life counterpart's recent form. There's going to be the option to manage your team's tactics, along with a 'pick and place' fielder management system.

As with all EA Sports' games, *Cricket 2000* boasts 'better than TV presentation', with Richie Benaud and David Gower in the commentary box and a host of TV-style replays. In fact, there will be more than 500 motion captured moves from top international players and multiple camera angles, including a batsman's and a stump camera. Whether the game manages a decent innings or not, we shall see next issue when reviewable copies have come our way.



After losing to Australia, again, the umpire suggests the English team try their luck at cats cradle instead.



Don't just stand there, run.



Cricket 2000 will have the actual teams, players and stadiums from the last World Cup.

SHORTS

BEARD ALERT

Originally titled *Swords & Sorcery* and announced last summer, *Wizards & Warriors* is the creation of DW Bradley, designer of the *Wizardry* series of games. In 3D, the game is very much a classic RPG, with over 300 monsters and 100 non-player characters available to meet. Now signed up by Activision, *Wizards & Warriors* will be out in July.



EL Dorado

This has nothing to do with the now defunct BBC soap opera, but is actually the next project from Larry Holland's Totally Games, developer of the *X-Wing* series of games for LucasArts. As the first in a new series of historical multiplayer action/adventures, *Eldorado* is set around 500 years in the past, where every quack with a boat was off looking for new lands to colonise. Currently only in the design stage, *Eldorado* is many moons from release and will no doubt be called something completely different when we hear of it again.

BATTLE OF BIRMINGHAM

If you're an *Air Warrior* fan, then you'll no doubt be popping along to the Great Barr Hotel in Birmingham for the European *Air Warrior* convention, due to be held from 18-20 August. As well as plenty of multiplayer dog fighting, lectures and competitions are planned. Check out the organisers website at www.vulch.cwc.net/AW2000.html for more details.

CROFTWORK

Unsurprisingly, rumours are already circulating that a new *Tomb Raider* is in development. Entitled *Tomb Raider: The Movie*, the game should tie in nicely with next summer's planned film release. The game may well be out before Christmas if recent reports are to be believed. Developer Core Design has yet to deny the existence of the game. Maybe we should ask first.

FISHY FINGERS

"My friend Jason has made a fishing sim, it's pretty smart." So says one *PC ZONE* reader. Unfortunately, we don't like fishing, it's barbaric and smelly. For primitive types who like playing with worms, go here: <http://home.freeuk.net/jcspooner> and tell Jason Richard Rowley sent you.

£10 OFF*
*Normal high street price

HALF-LIFE: GENERATIONS

Includes the latest version of *Half-Life*, *Team Fortress Classic* and *Half-Life: Opposing Force*.

It's well over a year since its first release and *Half-Life* is still without doubt the best PC game ever made. Since blowing our minds, the superb multiplayer freebie add-on *Team Fortress Classic* came out last summer and is still one of the most popular online games you can play. Finally, just a couple of months ago *Opposing Force* was unleashed, the mission pack that gave us the other side of the *Half-Life* story. Together for the first time and just out is *Generations*, the complete *Half-Life* compilation pack, and you can get your hands on it for just £29.99 – a full £10 off the recommended retail price. Sweet. And you get a limited edition T-shirt that you'll probably never wear, still, could be worth a few bob in a couple of years.

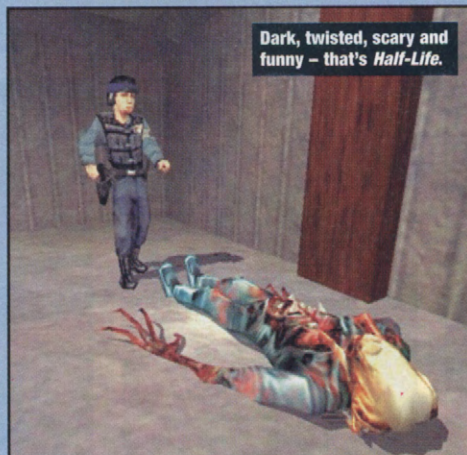
To get your sweaty mouse hand on a copy of *Half-Life: Generations*, just call the Gameplay.com hotline on 0113 234 0444. Remember to keep your copy of *PC ZONE* to hand, just in case they quiz you on it.



gameplay.com

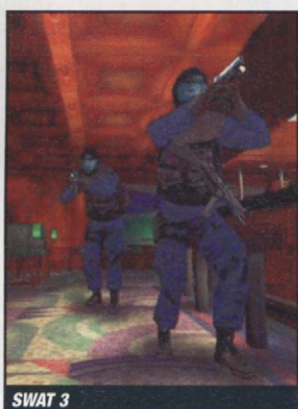
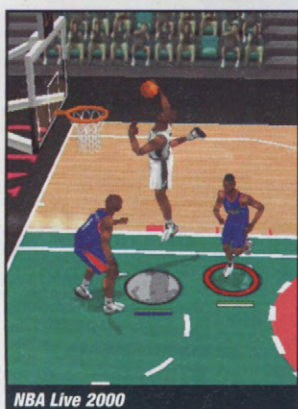
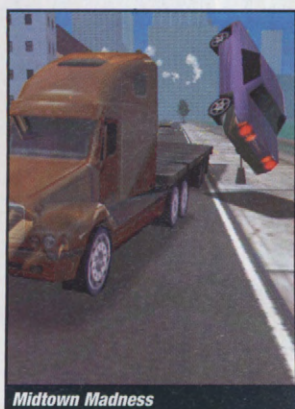
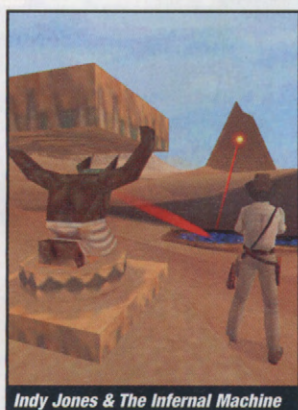
we're never beaten

★ Wireplay is now at Gameplay.com



Dark, twisted, scary and funny – that's *Half-Life*.

PCZONE READER



Friends, gamers, readers, lend us your votes. Do not ask what your magazine can do for you, but what you can do for your magazine. Yes, it's that time of year where you have the chance to vote for your favourite games of '99

Calling all gaming fans, your magazine needs you. Have you been itching to have your say as to what last year's best game was, but haven't had the chance to voice your opinion? Did you cry out in indignation, roll on the floor with anger and beat your fists on the carpet, screaming, 'Why?!' when no one else agreed that *Zeppelin Pilot 12* was the best game of 1999? Be silent no more, for the PC ZONE Reader Awards are here, and we're waiting for your votes.

Last month we mentioned gems like *Unreal Tournament* and *Age Of Empires II*, as well as several other PC ZONE Classics. However, games such as the hugely immersive *X - Beyond The Frontier* (PCZ #82, 89%), stunning footie sim *FIFA 2000* (PCZ #84, 88%) and tension-filled *SWAT 3* (PCZ #85, 89%) can't be overlooked just because they narrowly missed out on our now highly coveted 'Classic' award. *Quake III Arena* (PCZ #86, 89%), *Indiana Jones And The Infernal Machine* (PCZ # 84, 88%) and *Discworld Noir* (PCZ #79, 89%) must also surely be strong candidates for the top spots.

So far the response to the competition has been impressive, with replies piling into PC ZONE Towers by the sack load. But we need more, and if you haven't yet sent your votes in, then get writing. Either fill in the form and post it to us, or go to our website www.pczone.co.uk and vote from there. For those already registered on the site, you should have received your voting form via email by now. But in order to stop us from having to wade knee high in last-minute nominations, please send your entries to us as soon as possible. The closing date for the contest is 16 March, while the event itself will be held on Tuesday 11 April. It's set to be a great night, with *Never Mind The Buzzcocks'* Mark Lamarr hosting the awards at top London club Fabric, in Farringdon. With your help, it could all add up to be the most spectacular and tightly contested PC ZONE Reader Awards to date.

SO WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

It won't be just the games that will win. All of your postal and email votes will go into a prize draw, with each lucky winner receiving a mouth-watering prize from one of our sponsors. So now there's even more reason to send in your list of last year's top games. If you're thinking of voting by email, you'll need to state the category for each of the games you pick, eg Best Strategy Game: *Homeworld*. Don't forget to include your address and phone number as well, because without them your vote won't count. So if you haven't already done so, hurry up and get voting. [E]

AWARDS 1999

WIN WIN WIN

Not only do you get to have your say, you can win as well

The games you vote for won't be the only winners of the **PC ZONE** Reader Awards 1999. All Voting Forms and emails will be entered into a draw to win something suitably snazzy from one of the sponsors, so now there's extra incentive for you to send in your list of top games. Remember, your votes need to be with us by 16 March at the very latest, for our data entry monkeys to be able to process everything in time. Those of you voting by email need to state the categories the games you have chosen fall into (eg Best Role-Playing Game: *Baldur's Gate*), as well as your name, phone number and address. Without these your vote will be void. So get to it – and happy voting.

System Shock 2



THE CATEGORIES

Here are the categories for this year's awards, and a few of our recommendations for each one

BEST FIRST-PERSON ACTION GAME

Unreal Tournament, Quake III Arena, Aliens Vs Predator, Kingpin, Rogue Spear, Half-Life: Game Of The Year Edition, Hidden & Dangerous, Descent 3, Starsiege Universe

BEST STRATEGY GAME

Age Of Empires II: The Age Of Kings, Civilization II: The Test Of Time, Homeworld, Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri, C&C: Tiberian Sun, Dungeon Keeper II, Theme Park World, SimCity 3000

BEST ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

System Shock 2, Baldur's Gate, Lands Of Lore III, EverQuest, Ultima Online: The Second Age

BEST ACTION/ADVENTURE GAME

Indiana Jones And The Infernal Machine, The Nomad Soul, Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation, Resident Evil 2

BEST DRIVING GAME

Midtown Madness, Rally Championship, TOCA 2, Driver, Superbike World Championship

BEST SIMULATION

F/A 18E Super Hornet, Mig Alley, Flight Unlimited III, Team Alligator, Microsoft Flight Simulator 2000, FreeSpace 2

BEST SPORTS GAME

FIFA 2000, NBA Live 2000, Championship Manager 99/00, PGA Championship Golf, International Cricket Captain 2

GAME OF THE YEAR

Championship Manager 99/00, Unreal Tournament, Civilization II: Test Of Time, Hidden & Dangerous, Homeworld, System Shock 2, Half-Life, Dungeon Keeper II, C&C: Tiberian Sun, Age Of Empires II: The Age Of Kings, Midtown Madness, Ultima Online

BEST PUBLISHER

Sierra, GT Interactive, Activision, EA, Eidos, Interplay, Hasbro, Microsoft, Take 2

BEST DEVELOPER

Valve, id Software, Ensemble Studios, Westwood, Core Design, LucasArts, Origin, DMA Design

PCZONE READER AWARDS 1999 VOTING FORM

BEST FIRST-PERSON ACTION GAME

BEST STRATEGY GAME

BEST ROLE-PLAYING GAME

BEST ACTION/ADVENTURE GAME

BEST DRIVING GAME

BEST SIMULATION

BEST SPORTS GAME

GAME OF THE YEAR

PUBLISHER OF THE YEAR

DEVELOPER OF THE YEAR

Name:

Job Title:

Address:

Postcode:

Daytime Telephone:

☐ Please tick if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies

☐ Please tick if under 18 years of age

★ **TERMS AND CONDITIONS:** Entries with all nominations filled out correctly will be entered into the prize draw and winners will be selected at random after the closing date. The Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into and all winners will be notified by post. This competition is not open to employees of Dennis Publishing or any other companies associated with the Awards. Only one entry per reader. No cash alternatives will be offered. Submission of entry will be taken as acceptance of these rules.

SEND YOUR VOTES TO: Helen Cribb, **PC ZONE**, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

★ All nominations must reach us by 16 March, so please start sending them in right away. A photocopy of the voting form or a postcard are fine if you don't want to cut up your copy of the mag, just don't forget to include all the details required. Either this, or you can vote via the website as stated above, or through the email we send to you if you are already registered on the site.

SHORTS

HASBRO'S AUTUMN COLLECTION

At the recent American Toy Fair, Hasbro Interactive announced a clutch of new games due for release later this year. *Frogger 2*, sequel to 1998's rather poor 3D platform game, will be out in September, as will another 3D adventure, this time resurrecting everyone's favourite pill-popper *Pac Man*. Finally, Christmas will see *Monopoly Tycoon*, a full 3D version of the board game that combines elements of *Sim City*.

ROLL UP

Take 2 will be releasing *Rollcage: Stage II* next month, and mighty fine it looks too. Offering no less than ten gameplay modes, we are told months of exciting gameplay lie ahead. With fun-fuelled racers something of a minority on PC, *Rollcage II* is certain to be a firm favourite. Expect a review next issue.



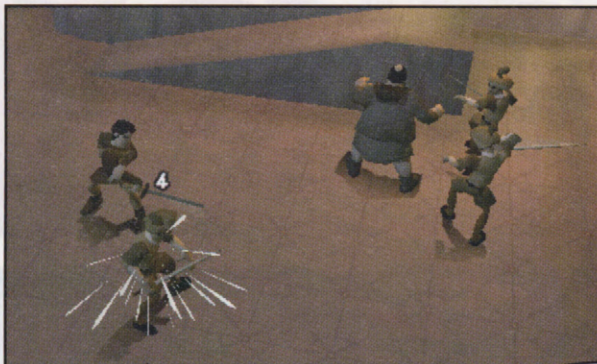
MOUSE MARINES

The US Marine Corps are considering using NovaLogic's *Delta Force 2* as a training aid to co-operative combat missions. Impressed by the terrain effects, especially the grass, a ten-player network is being set up at Camp Lejeune, with hopes to expand the training programme by including special scenarios.



ACTIVISION POWER UP

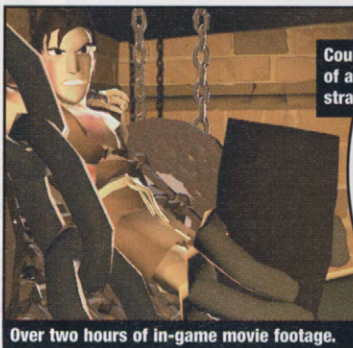
Activision has announced a sequel to last year's *Civilization: Call To Power*, calling it simply *Call To Power II*. Using an enhanced game engine, it will span 6,000 years – less than it's predecessor – although the number of turns will almost double. Updated graphics and an enhanced diplomacy system are the other big changes, and we'll only have to wait until Autumn.



In combat, your characters are essentially immortal, prone only to lose consciousness in battle.

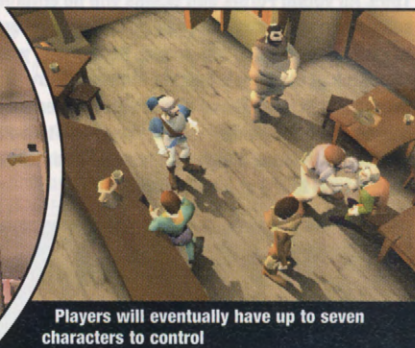


'Is the washing dry yet?'



Could this be the first of a new breed of strategy adventures?

Over two hours of in-game movie footage.



Players will eventually have up to seven characters to control



Heart Of Darkness? Only joking.



Heart Of Stone is set in pre-Renaissance Europe, from Spain to Istanbul.

HEART OF STONE

A good adventure these days is hard to find, but Pyro might just have the solution...

There's no doubt about the fact that adventure games as we know them are pretty much a dying breed. The point-and-click adventure has gone the way of the text-based one, replaced, it seems, by the vacuum of *Tomb Raider* clones, which promise story and interaction, but more often than not, have neither. Ho-hum.

It's not all bad news though, Pyro Studios has an adventure in the works that not only points and clicks, it looks the business and offers intelligent real-time strategy as well. It goes by the name of *Heart Of Stone* and promises to be a very intelligent and beautiful adventure.

Set in the 16th Century, you play a young student with a price on his head, who eventually teams up with a bunch of disparate adventurers in order to clear his name.

Although the plot is shrouded in secrecy, what Pyro is hoping to create is an adventure based on character interaction rather than random manipulation of objects. There will be multiple paths

through the game where if talking fails, fighting may prove a better way forward, depending on how you want to play. In its scope *Heart Of Stone* can be likened to a European *Final Fantasy VIII*, with the same visual detail but featuring a decent combat system.

Reminiscent of *Myth*, combat will be a real-time point-and-click affair where each character's strengths must be used to the full. Positioning and use of the environment will be central, as will the use of inventory items (some of which will have a life of their own). The archer character for example, can use torches to light arrows, and then send them arcing into barrels of explosives. One character can cast a lightning spell, which if directed at soldiers standing in a puddle, will cause their skeletons to glow through their skin.

Heart Of Stone really does look amazing, even with a year to go until its release. The animation has an almost cinematic feel and lends weight to the argument that with *Commandos 2* (see p55) and *Praetorians* (p18) also on the way, Pyro Studios is certainly making a name for itself.

TEAM TALK

A quick chat with the part-timers who make games for love and not for money. This month we see what *Starshatter* creator John DiCamillo has to say for himself...



Who are you and what are you working on?

My name is John DiCamillo, but most people call me 'Milo'. I'm developing a new space sim called *Starshatter* (<http://members.home.net/milod>).

Starshatter is a military space combat simulation set in the far future. Unlike most space sims, *Starshatter* allows the player to directly command a wide variety of ships, from agile atmospheric and space-based fighters to giant battleships and fleet carriers. *Starshatter* aims to simulate the complete space combat experience – from planet surface to interstellar space – with several dynamic campaigns, set in a persistently simulated universe.

How many people are working on the project and where are they based?

Just myself. I do game design, code, art, I even wrote the player manual. I work out of my home in south Orange County, California.

What would be your ideal job in the games industry?

This *is* my ideal job in the games industry.

What do you do for a living and how much time do you devote to *Starshatter*?

By day, I'm a senior software engineer at an Internet startup called eBuilt. We develop ecommerce systems for companies that want to do business on the Internet.

I've been working on *Starshatter* in my spare time for about three years. I usually put in about ten or 20 hours a week, mostly between the hours of

10pm and 4am, while my wife and kids are sleeping. And yes, I do drink a lot of coffee.

When will it be finished?

Ah, the age old question. Have you ever worked as a producer? Seriously, it's hard to say, as it depends on how much free time I can scrape together – but probably sometime toward the end of 2001.

What are your hopes for *Starshatter*?

Mostly, I hope I survive the process of making it! My main goal in building *Starshatter* is to create something that I will still want to play when I'm done. That means that it has to be fun to fly the fighters and command the starships. And it also means that the campaigns have to make some kind of military sense. The missions can't be just a random collection of events that sounded cool at the time they were designed. Every action must support the war effort in a logical manner.

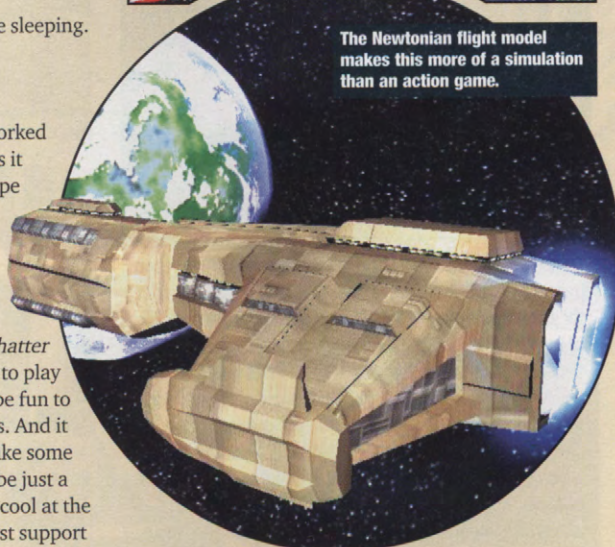
Another thing I'm trying to do with this game is bring space combat simulation up to date. The ship types, sensors, weapons, and mission roles in *Starshatter* are all based on modern jet fighters and naval surface ships, instead of their World War II era counterparts.

As far as publishing is concerned, while I'd love to see a nice shiny *Starshatter* box on store shelves some day, I'd be quite satisfied to do a limited production run myself and just sell it over the Internet. My main goal is just to develop the best space sim I can and have some fun.

What games are you looking forward to and why? *Freelancer*, just to see what all the hype is about



Currently in pre-alpha, we'll bring you the latest version on next month's CD.



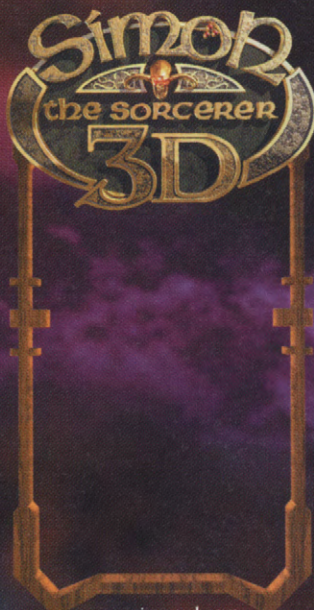
The Newtonian flight model makes this more of a simulation than an action game.

and *Battlecruiser 3020AD*, to see if Derek Smart's new terrain engine is better than mine. And, of course, *Babylon 5: Into The Fire* (recently canned by Sierra – Ed), if it ever gets made, to see their dynamic campaign system.

Can people who play the demo of *Starshatter* make any suggestions on how to improve it? If so, how?

Absolutely! My main reason for releasing such an early demo was to get feedback on the flight model, combat, and graphics performance. Please send all comments to milod@home.com. I'm interested in anything that generates a strong opinion, positive or negative.

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do you put
the magic
back in her
life?



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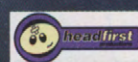
Complex, humorous and highly entertaining story line.

3D Sub-games – Gnome Firing Competition, Tight Rope Walking, Darts, Climbing, Crazy Golf and More.

Enjoy discovering the surroundings with mentally challenging puzzles.

Visit highly involving and immersive locations.

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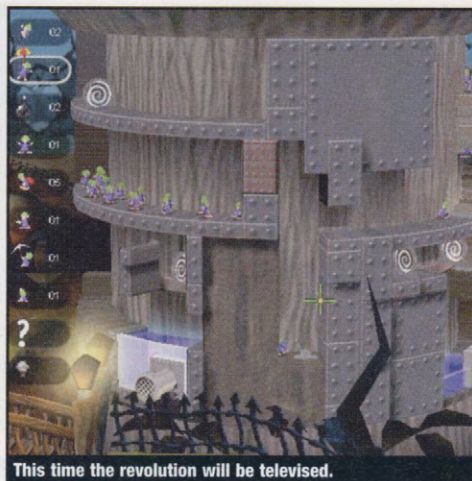


The Man who KNOWS

YOU'LL GO BLIND

The once sophisticated world of PC gaming is set to reach unprecedented depths of despair with the release of, wait for it, *Panty Raider: From Here to Immaturity*. The work of low-brow specialists **Simon & Schuster**, creators of the best-selling *Deer Avenger*. The hilarious new title involves the as yet unexplored game topic of supermodels in their undercrackers. To quote the press release: "To save the earth from Nasty Teenage Aliens, gamers will seek out supermodels to strip them down to their bra and panties." Apparently, said Nasty Teenage Aliens have acquired a lingerie catalogue and so impressed are they by the photographs of scantily clad models that they have set off for earth in search of more of the same. Players will assume the role of Nelson, a hapless human bystander who is forced to take the pictures on, of all places, **Model Island**. Should he fail in this none too taxing task, the aliens will, of course, destroy the planet. As the overtly zany press release maintains: "Waste too much time undressing a supermodel... BOOM! Earth will be destroyed - can you control yourself?" The answer is yes, although anyone simple enough to buy the game will have to coax the models into wearing the correct lingerie before they can be photographed. This can be achieved with cheesy pickup lines, X-ray glasses, 'goop' which mysteriously removes a model's clothing when thrown at her and bait such as tiny mints and credit cards that, apparently "no self-respecting supermodel can resist." Clearly, no self-respecting gamer will go near it, but even the hormonally challenged hoping to create their own version of *Way Of The Blurred Fist* will be disappointed, as *Panty Raider* is not so much a soft-porn extravaganza as a pointless charade of simplistic cartoon graphics, masquerading as entertainment. *Lula: The Sexy Empire*, anyone?

However, for one-handed gamers everywhere, the scope for self-loving is becoming more widespread. Some years ago, it was enough to fill a CD with a random selection of unlikely acts of human degradation and simply sell it as smut. Nowadays though, the tendency is to fashion said acts of human degradation into something approaching a game, such as *Days Of Oblivion*, which had the player "catapulted directly into the Year 2144" where "besides various adventures in a doomsday atmosphere, this game contains many exciting erotic scenes, which can be overcome by only brain and sexual power." **German**. Remarkably, a sequel is in the offing - *Days Of Oblivion II - Frozen Eternity* - which with more than 50 real actors, underwater shootings and various cut-scenes, proudly claims to be "the most expensive erotic adventure game ever produced in Germany." An English version is on its way, and as usual, expect there to be plenty of copies available. Try as they might, they'll never beat a locked door and a copy of *Razle*.



This time the revolution will be televised.



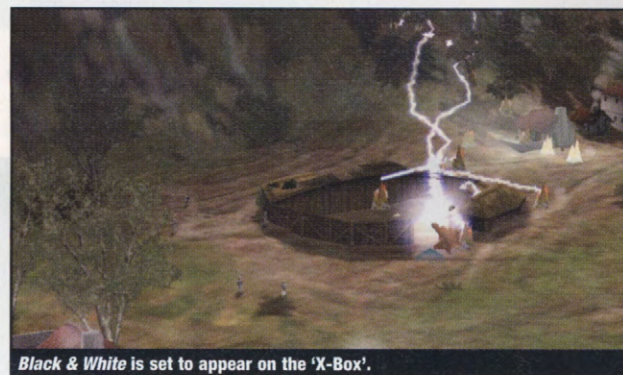
Rather than scrolling, the screen rotates.

MAY RELEASE DAY FOR LEMMINGS

Whereas in most cases 'back to basics' invariably means 'can't be bothered', the return to the gameplay style of the original *Lemmings* for *Lemmings Revolution* should be applauded after such abysmal titles as *Lemmings Paintball*.

Due for release at the end of May by Take 2, *Lemmings Revolution* will be the eighth in the *Lemmings* series, and for the first time will see everyone's favourite suicidal mammals in hardware accelerated 3D as you guide them to safety across 200 wraparound, cylindrical levels.

As well as your common or garden green-haired variety of Lemming, players will get to direct two new species, both obviously genetically-modified, with one inheriting the ability to swim and the other able to resist high temperatures. There will be eight new skills, along with the eight traditional skills: anti-gravity, herder, lantern, rocket, slow down, speed up, trampoline and the spectacular sounding catherine wheel.



Black & White is set to appear on the 'X-Box'.

X-BOX IN BLACK & WHITE

Concrete details on Microsoft's console, codenamed 'X-Box', are starting to emerge, the most disappointing being that its software will not be compatible with PCs. Microsoft is still remaining tight-lipped on the project, but practically the entire games industry knows the machine is on the way, with most people convinced it will be on the shelves by the end of next year.

Publisher Activision has as good as admitted it is developing software for the 'X-Box', and we have even heard that Lionhead's first title, *Black & White*, will appear. As you read this, in fact, the cat should already be out of the bag. Check out the latest news at www.pczone.co.uk

TICKER TAPE

STARTS++ A *Quake III Arena* expansion pack is expected within the next few months, although we don't know what it'll consist of. A few more game modes would be nice... **++STOP++** Seattle-based Zombie Studios has licensed Monolith's LithTech 2.0 graphics engine for the third in the *Spec Ops* series, *Navy Seals*. They plan to use the same engine for *Shrapnel*, a 3D action game, based on the comics of the same name. **++STOP++** Out next month is *The Settlers III: Gold Edition*, which includes *Settlers III* plus its two mission packs. Exclusive new single and multiplayer maps will be included, as well as a soundtrack CD featuring music from Blue Byte's back catalogue of games. **++STOP++** Although Acclaim has just announced *Re-Volt 2* for PlayStation, there are no plans to release a PC version **++ENDS**

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

The latest culprits who failed to turn up
to this morning's assembly

HEAVY METAL: FAKK 2 (Ritual)

LAST SEEN: PCZ #80

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE: 2000

We previewed this game back in issue 80, but May is now the proposed date for Ritual Entertainment's *Tomb Raider*-esque offering. The first third of the game is as good as ready, with the other two sections being around 8 per cent complete. It centres around an (inevitably) big-busted female character called Julia, who must defend her home world from the evil Gith Industries. Among the promised features is a unique combat system, which will allow Julia to pull off simultaneous offensive and defensive techniques. With the game utilising the *Quake III* engine and Julia having around 5,000 frames of animation, it looks as though we could all be in for some visual delights.

NOW OUT: May



Is it cold in here or
is it just me?

DIABLO II (Blizzard)

LAST SEEN: PCZ #78

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE: November '99

The original *Diablo* was a firm favourite with RPG fans, and it looks as though this highly promising sequel, now scheduled for May, will make an equally impressive impact. Blizzard is currently tweaking several multiplayer features through extensive game testing, so that the game is as bug-free as possible, and it certainly looks like being one of the best RPGs to date.

NOW OUT: May



Diablo will boast loads
of powerful spells.

BLADE (Rebel act)

LAST SEEN: PCZ #79

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE: November '99

Blade was aiming at a June release date, but due to problems with quality control, Infogrames has canned the project. The game featured some of the best and most realistic looking graphics we'd ever seen, but it was the gameplay Infogrames was concerned about. Let's hope its fears were unfounded and a new publisher can be found soon.

NOW OUT: Unknown



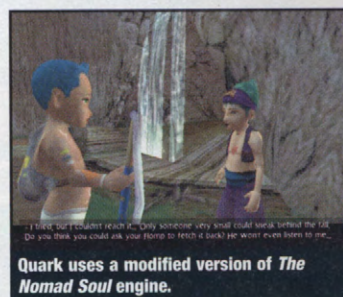
Unfortunately, *Blade* has
canned by Infogrames.



Bizarre creatures can be ridden in this massive adventure.



Don't ask!



Quark uses a modified version of *The Nomad Soul* engine.



Our offices are just around the corner.

QUARK

Nothing to do with *Star Trek*, the next game from Quantic Dream, developer of the Bowie game *The Nomad Soul*, is *Quark*. Billed as a 3D action adventure, the action takes place across two divided worlds – one modern-day London, the other the fairytale world of *Quark*. To solve the non-linear adventure, players will be able to travel between the two worlds and control a number of characters and creatures and battle in real-time 3D. We imagine a cross between the recent Bowie vehicle and *Final Fantasy VIII*, but seeing as it's being developed in France, it could be anything quite frankly. No release details are yet known.

Simon is back...

Real-time 3D adventure with over 60
Characters to interact with.

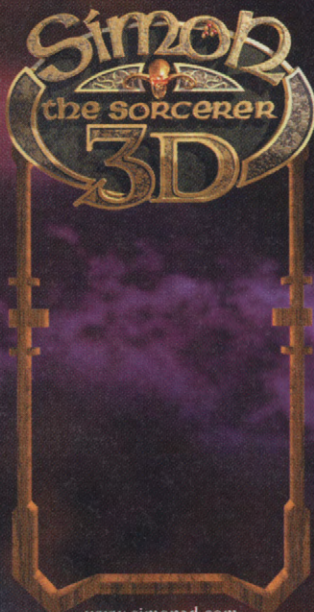
Have fun with the ribald jokes, sly
humour and 'off the cuff' quips.

Complex, humorous and highly
entertaining story line.

3D Sub-games – Gnome Firing
Competition, Tight Rope Walking,
Darts, Climbing, Crazy Golf and More.

Enjoy discovering the surroundings
with mentally challenging puzzles.

Visit highly involving and
immersive locations.



Show her your wand!



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MICRO PROSE

www.microprose.com

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Published by Hasbro Interactive Inc.
Developed by Headfirst Productions.



HOTSHOTS

Through the fog of war come three of the year's biggest 3D real-time strategy games, each subtly different in gameplay and each equally handsome in the graphics department

DARK REIGN 2

★ Activision • Out June

Having just got *BattleZone II* out the door and onto the shelves, developer Pandemic Studios can now concentrate solely on finishing up its second big game, *Dark Reign 2*. Unsurprisingly, not only is it looking fantastic, with realistic scaling of buildings and units, but the game offers a wealth of strategic possibilities for fans of real-time strategy – with night and day cycles, shadows and intricate variation in terrain.

Dark Reign 2 will also come bundled with a ton of tools, which will enable you to create your own maps and campaigns, as well as units, skins and total conversions. As an RTS, *Dark Reign 2* is likely to have the best third-party support since the original *Total Annihilation*.





EARTH 2150

★ Mattel Interactive • Out May

Although its 2D predecessor failed to make much of an impression on the real-time strategy genre, *Earth 2150* should fare a whole lot better, not just because it's in 3D, but because it's simply a better game. Already released in its native Germany, a full UK release isn't far off, with just a translation into English to be finished up.

Like *Dark Reign 2*, *Earth 2150* includes day and night cycles and, although there are no infantry units, you can design your own ships, tanks and planes and even create bases underground. If that's not enough, you can also set up cameras across the battlefield so you can see in three places at once. Das ist schön, ya?



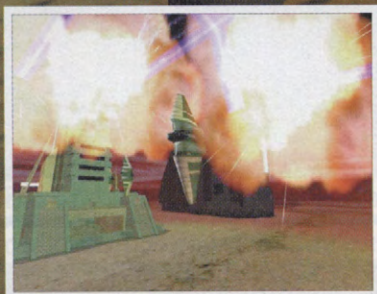
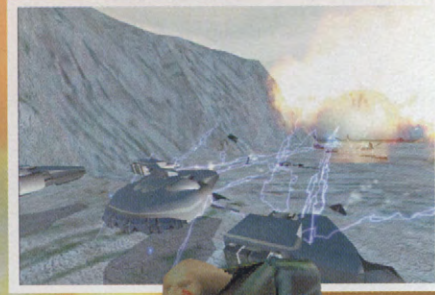

GROUND CONTROL

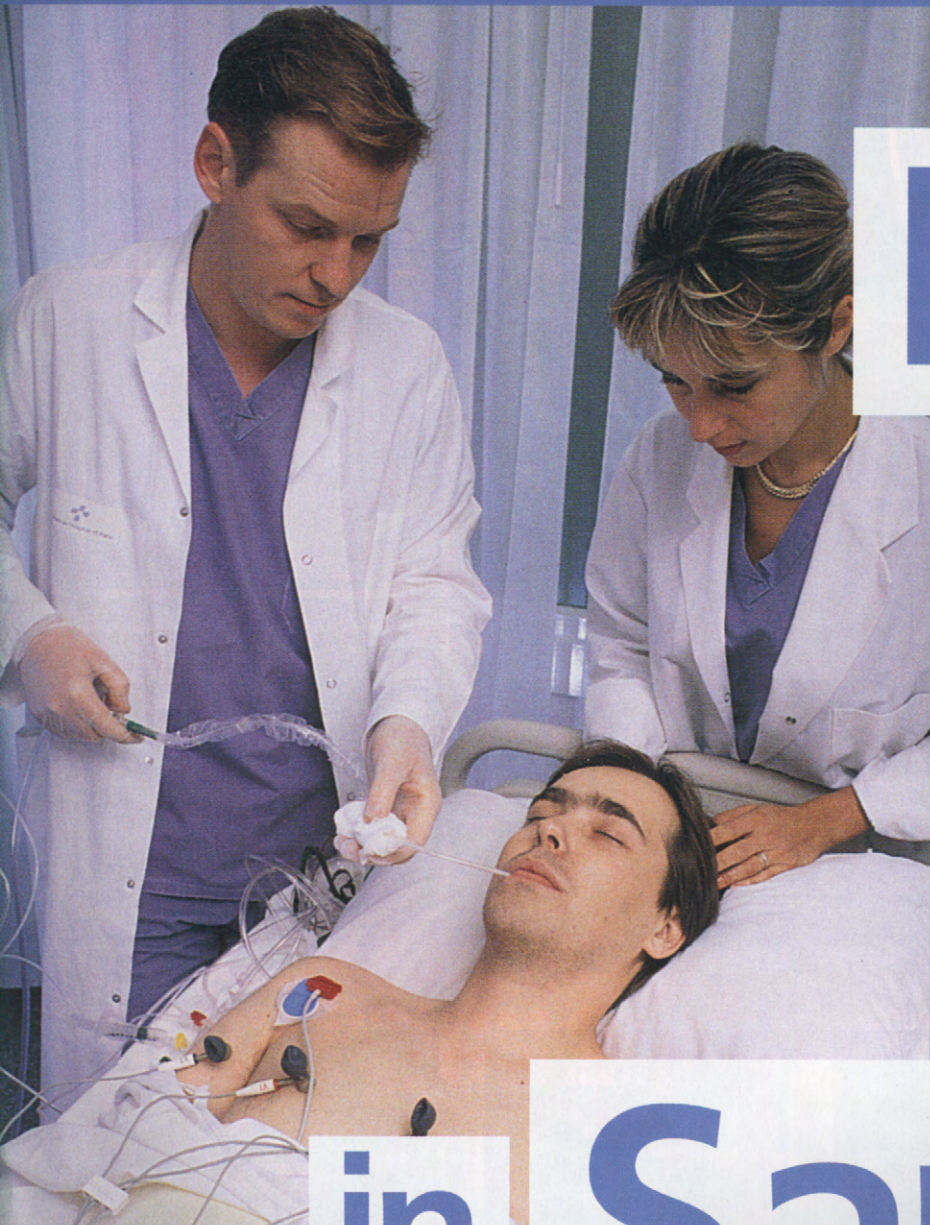
★ Sierra • Out May

For those of you sick to death of the usual round of resource management and en masse destruction evident in virtually all real-time strategy games these days, *Ground Control*, from Sweden's Massive Entertainment, could well be the game to cure your ills.

With not a harvester or any raw materials in sight, *Ground Control* centres solely on squad-based strategy. Choose units for each platoon, equip them with the right weapons and send them into battle, using stealth, positioning and brute force to overcome the enemy.

We clocked the game on a recent UK trip from Massive's CEO Martin Walfisz, who, along with showing off some truly amazing graphics – up there with the likes of *Homeworld* – demonstrated the game's intuitive control method. Check out the movie on this month's CD for further evidence of this game's potential.





I left n

h

in

San Fran



It may be a beautiful town, but the cabbies are lethal. And now you can join them. Choose from 4 different vehicles and you're away – cutting through

ny

heart

ncisco.



traffic and driving like a maniac, for money. Only one thing matters – getting passengers from A to B in record time. And remember, no-one said they had to arrive in one piece.

Crazy Taxi ©Sega Enterprises, Ltd., 2000. Sega & Dreamcast are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Sega Enterprises, Ltd. R.R.P. £39.99



Dreamcast.

Up to 6 billion players

www.dreamcast-europe.com
Dreamarena

Always wanted to join a school for scandal? Try...

KLINGON ACADEMY

Klingons in space or a *Star Trek* remake of *Police Academy*?
Mark Hill goes undercover and suffers embarrassing
initiation rituals to bring you this exclusive preview





THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER 14 Degrees East
PUBLISHER Interplay
WEBSITE www.interplay.com.
OUT June

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ It's the prequel to *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*
- ★ It's 100 million times better than *Starfleet Academy*
- ★ The graphics are gorgeous
- ★ Interactive Space Terrain
- ★ Command large capital ships
- ★ Give orders to a crew that gains experience

Before the Borg came along to brighten the often dull lives of *Star Trek* crews the universe over, there was only one race able to break the monotony of starched uniforms, prime directives and uptight diplomacy: the Klingons. In contrast with the restrained behaviour of the Starfleet crew, and almost every other race in the *Trek* universe, these ugly corrugated headed aliens are a bizarre combination of American high school brain-dead partygoers, honour-obsessed samurais and monstrous demons. A bit like rugby union players, actually.

A space combat sim in nature, *Klingon Academy* differs from your usual blast 'em up in that it accurately recreates the experience of commanding a large vessel, issuing orders to your crew members and completing assignments as a story of intrigue and deception within the Klingon Empire unfolds.

WE COULDN'T KAHLESS

By now, there's a good chance the non-diehard trekkies among you will be falling off your chairs with boredom and planning to turn the page very quickly. After all, the antecedents aren't astounding. Games based on the series have usually relied more on the licence than on actual gameplay. If you cast your mind back to the two games closest to *Klingon Academy* you might remember that *Klingon Honor Guard* was a good-looking (at the time) but empty first-person shooter, while the direct predecessor of KA, *Starfleet Academy*, had enough flaws to fill a worm hole.

With all this baggage, there's more than enough reason to be sceptical. But, from what we've seen of KA so far, we can safely brush those doubts aside. Developer 14 Degrees East, has really taken

on board all the criticisms levelled at *Starfleet Academy* and come up with the game we all wanted in the first place.

The biggest criticism was how the ships handled, moving about like small *X-Wing*-style fighters, rather than the large cruisers with hundreds of crew members on board they are supposed to be. But, at the same time, you can't slow down the action so much that it would make the game boring to play. We asked Ralph Hernandez, the game's producer, if he thought they had achieved the right balance between slowing down the pace while still keeping it exciting? "I believe we are about 90 per cent there," he says. "There are still some discrepancies we have to iron out. The biggest challenge with this is that everyone has a different perspective on how slow a slow capital ship should be. For this reason, we've taken a great deal of care trying to accommodate both those players who want a very slow pace, and those who want a much faster experience. When we ship the game, both extremes will be happy with the results."

"You'll get the chance to blow up some self-righteous Federation gits as well as other races"

So don't go expecting a trigger-happy *FreeSpace* experience, but neither should you be afraid of a 'flight sim in space' situation, with several volumes of manuals and *Battlecruiser*-like complexity.

"KA is substantially different enough, such that anyone who plays it will immediately recognise it as a different kind of space sim. One that is simultaneously more sophisticated than the classic space sim, yet easier to play in a lot of respects."

THE UNDISCOVERED PREQUEL

The events in the game are set just before the sixth *Star Trek* film, *The Undiscovered Country*, and serve to explain in some measure many of the motives behind the main characters. The most important being the one-eyed General Chang, incarnated in the movie by Christopher Plummer, who reprises his role for the many FMV sequences that link the missions together.

Of course, none of this means that you need to have seen the film, or have any interest in doing so, to derive enjoyment from the game. All you need to know is that the setting is in the original *Star Trek*

universe of Kirk and co, when the humans and the Klingons had yet to sign a peace treaty. This means you'll get the chance to blow up some self-righteous Federation gits as well as the other races in the game (Romulans, Gorns, Tholians and Sha'kurians). In fact, one of your first missions as a trainee captain is a simulated battle against Starfleet ships, including a glorious finale versus Captain Toupee himself and his Enterprise.

Once you matriculate from the academy, you are sent out into the real world, commanding a group of inexperienced officers and taking part in events that will shape the history of the Empire.

The game will progress through linear missions because, in the words of Hernandez, "the ending of our game sets up the events in *Star Trek VI*, therefore, we can only have one ending. But," he reassures us, "within each mission there are different paths the player may take to arrive at the same conclusion."

How many objectives you complete in each mission, and the manner in which you do, has a major effect on subsequent missions. You'll also be happy to know that there'll be none of the boring diplomatic missions that made up much of *Starfleet Academy*. This is a space combat sim after all. That doesn't mean, however, that there's no scope for variety; that will come in the shape of reconnaissance missions using cloaking devices or playing a major tactical role in greater conflicts.

THE SOUND OF KLINGON OPERA

Sing along now, children: Doe, a deer, a glorious prey... Ray, a deadly laser beam...

What is scarier than a bald Klingon with an eye-patch? Christopher Plummer's earlier incarnation, Captain Von Trapp, singing *Edelweiss* alone with his guitar in *The Sound Of Music* for starters.



Before the make up...



... and after.

SHIPS AND RACES

Klingons, Federation and Romulans have around 10 ship classes each, while the rest should have about five

KLINGON

What more do we need to say about this lot. They're ugly, they smell and you're one of them. Remember that Klingons do not tolerate failure.



Bird Of Prey



Heavy Battlecruiser

FEDERATION

Everybody knows who these characters are. Mainly made up of pesky humans. Always saying: "Open a channel."



Dreadnought



Command Cruiser

ROMULANS

Closely related to the Vulcans, but with dangerous backstabbing, treacherous qualities. Bless them. Oh, and they also have cloaking technology.



Light Cruiser



Romulan Dreadnought

GORNS

A civilisation in decline, the Gorn Star Kingdom still has enough weaponry to make a formidable opponent. But they're only a bunch of biped lizards.



King Snake Frigate



Gorn Dreadnought

THOLIANS

This xenophobic and isolationist race is a silicon-based life-form, so wear space suits if you fancy boarding their ships.



Tholian Destroyer



Tholian Battlecruiser

SHA'KURIANS

An ancient race of amphibious humanoids, the Sha'kurians are organised in feudal families. And they also managed to get hold of cloaking technology.



Light Carrier



Superiority Fighter

Q&A

RALPH HERNANDEZ



Ralph not only bears a striking resemblance to a real Klingon, he is also the game's producer and a connoisseur of alien beverages.

PCZ What was the first game you ever played?

RALPH Asteroids.

PCZ What is the best one you've ever played?

RALPH That's a tough one. My top three are: *Baldur's Gate*, *Falcon 4.0*, and *Pong*. Not necessarily in that order.

PCZ What was the last game you bought with your own money?

RALPH I bought *Master Of Orion* in 1994. I was

hired at Interplay in April of that same year. You can do the math.

PCZ Have you ever been in a drunken bar brawl? If so, what happened?

RALPH I've never been in one, but I've tried to start a few. Every time I try to start one, people just look at me, blink for a moment, then start to laugh. I think they're not taking me seriously because I'm too self-conscious. I'm seeing a therapist about it, though...

PCZ Can you list the ingredients of blood wine?

RALPH 2 cups non-congealed blood (human, of course, preferably from a former spouse)
12 fluid ounces vodka (Absolut, or better)
2 packets 'Del Scorcho'™ hot sauce
1 tablespoon unrefined sugar
Stir vigorously for no less than thirty minutes. Serves up to four geeks.



If your screen gets cluttered, just destroy everything in sight.

CV

INTERPLAY

14 Degrees East is a recently created division of Interplay, but the company has been knocking out *Star Trek* games, all based on the original series, for a good while now.

1994 *Star Trek: Judgment Rites*. Old-style adventure without the laughs and the chance to die.

1994 *Star Trek: 25th Anniversary*. Another adventure based on the original series but without the cast's voices.

1997 *Star Trek: Starfleet Academy*. The flawed space sim *K4* is looking to infinitely improve upon.

1999 *Star Trek: Starfleet Command*. A strange space combat strategy that won't appeal to everybody but a good game nonetheless.

2000 *Star Trek: New Worlds*. Coming out later this year, this is a nice looking 3D C&C-style game.

SMOKE ME A QOGH, SKIPPER, I'LL BE BACK FOR BREAKFAST

Because you are the captain of a large vessel, you have much more on your plate than steering the ship around and shooting at things. The helm is just one of many stations, including communications, weapons and engineering, each one manned by a member of your crew. You have the choice of doing everything yourself, skipping from one console to the next like a frantic kangaroo, but that would be stupid. Can you imagine Picard running around the bridge, pushing an ensign aside to enter new co-ordinates and nudging past Worf to fire a couple of plasma torpedoes? It's much more cool to just stand there and say things like 'Engage'. It doesn't mean you won't have anything else to do (far from it), but issuing commands will be an essential part of the game.

In what we are hoping will be a similar interface to the one in the brilliant *SWAT 3*, a hot-key system will have all orders just a touch of a button away, ensuring that even in the heat of battle you have every aspect of the situation under control. This is

what 14 Degrees East is calling its Verbal Orders System. "It's basically a menuing system worked off the numeric keypad," reveals Hernandez. "At the bottom of the player's HUD (or tactical view), is a row of numbers with the name of a bridge officer attached to it. Hitting their designated number key will bring up a small menu overlay of that officer's options, in the lower left-hand corner of the screen. Each of those options also work off the numeric keypad, and they may in turn bring up other submenus, depending upon the officer you are selecting."

OK, so it may sound a tad confusing on paper, but if you've played *SWAT 3* you'll know how intuitive such an interface can be. Plus, as he points out, there are many advantages to be gained from this system. "1) all functions of your ship can be controlled from one localised area of the keyboard (the numeric keypad); 2) there is no need for an extensive key chart, since all the functions will be available through on-screen menu overlays; 3) functions can be mapped to a single keystroke, at the player's discretion; and 4) voice-over will be

That's one nice elongation you've got there.



Lucy in the sky.
With diamonds.

Mission Objectives
Destroy all Enemy ships
Kills: 2/7
Wingmen: 4/4

Player Ship		Team 2 Ship 2	
Hull	30	Hull	99
Comm	97	Comm	100
Warp	30	Warp	99
Impulse	94	Impulse	100
Sensors	97	Sensors	100
Primary	93	Primary	100
Secondary	92	Secondary	100
Special	100	Heavy	100

Hey Mr Tambourine Man, kill a Klingon for me.

applied to each order to give the player the impression that he is issuing orders to his bridge crew." So, if ever there was a good excuse to learn Klingonese (other than being seriously mentally ill), this could be it.

To make things even more interesting, your crew's abilities will improve as they gain experience from each mission, depending on how you have performed. This makes each member of your team invaluable as they develop into skilled characters you may have to rely on for your life. So stabbing them in the back with a *qutluch* because you don't like the way they looked at you at the breakfast table is a big no-no.

BOARD TO DEPTH

But the depth of *Klingon Academy* goes much further than all this. If you manage to bring an enemy ship's shields down, for example, you'll be able to make an attempt at boarding it using the marines on your vessel to either attempt to take command of it or sabotage it. Of course, this works both ways and you may find that someone is trying

to get his foot in your hot rod. We asked Hernandez how this would work: "You'd have to divert power to internal security systems to help combat the invaders. It's really a question of what you prioritise, because you would most likely be fighting other ships in space at the time you might be boarded," he says. "Of course, the perfect solution would be to get the player to switch to a first-person shooter the moment enemy marines board your ship, or if you send away teams to an enemy ship. Unfortunately, that's way too ambitious for an already ambitious game. If we were to do a sequel, however..."

The prospect has a grown Klingon weeping into his blood wine, and we can only hope it will happen one day. As it is, there's already plenty to look forward to. And we haven't even mentioned the multiplayer side of things (where you'll be able to play as any of the races mentioned). Suffice it to say, if you're a fan of space sims, you should start head-butting your friends in excitement - this game is gonna rock (enormous cornish pastie shaped bells). **PCZ**

NOT JUST A PRETTY SPACE

One of the biggest innovations is the interactive space terrain. After all, what's the use of gorgeous backgrounds if you can't use them?



One black hole.



One gas giant.



One planetary ring.



And one sun. For good luck.

The star systems the game takes place in aren't just black landscapes with dotted stars painted on them, they are populated with nebulae, planets, black holes, etc. What makes them different from other beautifully rendered backgrounds is that each terrain has unique properties, which will have an impact on the ships cruising through or by them, with the consequent tactical importance they have in the heat of battle. For example, you could hide in a nebula when facing insurmountable odds so enemy ships can't detect you or, if you are being attacked by a much larger ship, you could draw them into an asteroid belt. You can even fight inside black holes (not recommended) and bombard planets. All of which adds a considerable amount of depth to the usual track down opposition, blast until destroyed gameplay most of us are used to.



A helpful view of the action.



How did the thick Klingons come up with this design?



A sinister, gun-wielding terrorist, hell-bent on world destruction.

You look great, but lose the socks honey.

Realism is the key DEUS EX

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Ion Storm
PUBLISHER Eidos
WEBSITE www.ionstorm.com
OUT Spring 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Same deal as *System Shock 2*, which is...
- ★ Role-playing with a proper 3D engine
- ★ Unbelievable attention to detail
- ★ It's not far off finished

A few issues back Charlie and Steve wrote a feature about realism in computer games. What they essentially said was that reality, rather than fantasy, should play a much more widespread role in our everyday computer-gaming lives. They said that with the advancement of 3D acceleration, our gaming environments should begin to echo our everyday surroundings and that this association with well-known motifs would bring a sense of familiarity and bonding unseen outside a *Saving Private Ryan* screening for the over-85s.

Can it be true? We're finally going to get a role-playing game set in a completely realistic contemporary environment? Not only that, but it's from the same guy who created *Ultima Underworld*. Paul Mallinson jumps for joy

In short: that realism was the key to creating a truly immersive gaming experience. And not only did they say that, but they also went as far as citing Ion Storm's forthcoming RPG, *Deus Ex*, as the game most likely to prove their point – that real is better than, uh, *Unreal*.

Lead game designer and co-director of Ion Storm Warren Spector is the man behind *Deus Ex* and, from what we know about him already, he is someone who is obsessed with the issue of realism, story-telling, technology advancement and gameplay design. His past works include *Ultima Underworld*, one and two (both astoundingly far-ahead of anything else at the time), *System Shock* (ditto), *Wings Of Glory*, several games in the *Ultima* series, and *Thief: The*

Dark Project (which he left half way through to join Ion Storm). To some extent, pretty much every one of these games has pushed the boundaries of acceptable gaming realism to its limit. So, when the chance came to meet up with the guy and look at *Deus Ex*, we at PC ZONE seized on it with gusto.

CONVOLUTED

In the safety of a darkened room somewhere in the darkest depths of London, Warren Spector starts *Deus Ex* for us. He speaks quickly, passionately emphasising his words and shuffling his feet in excitement while the game loads. In short: he's really into it, and it shows.

"First off I'm going to summon a sniper rifle to show you something..." he begins. "OK, you'll notice that the

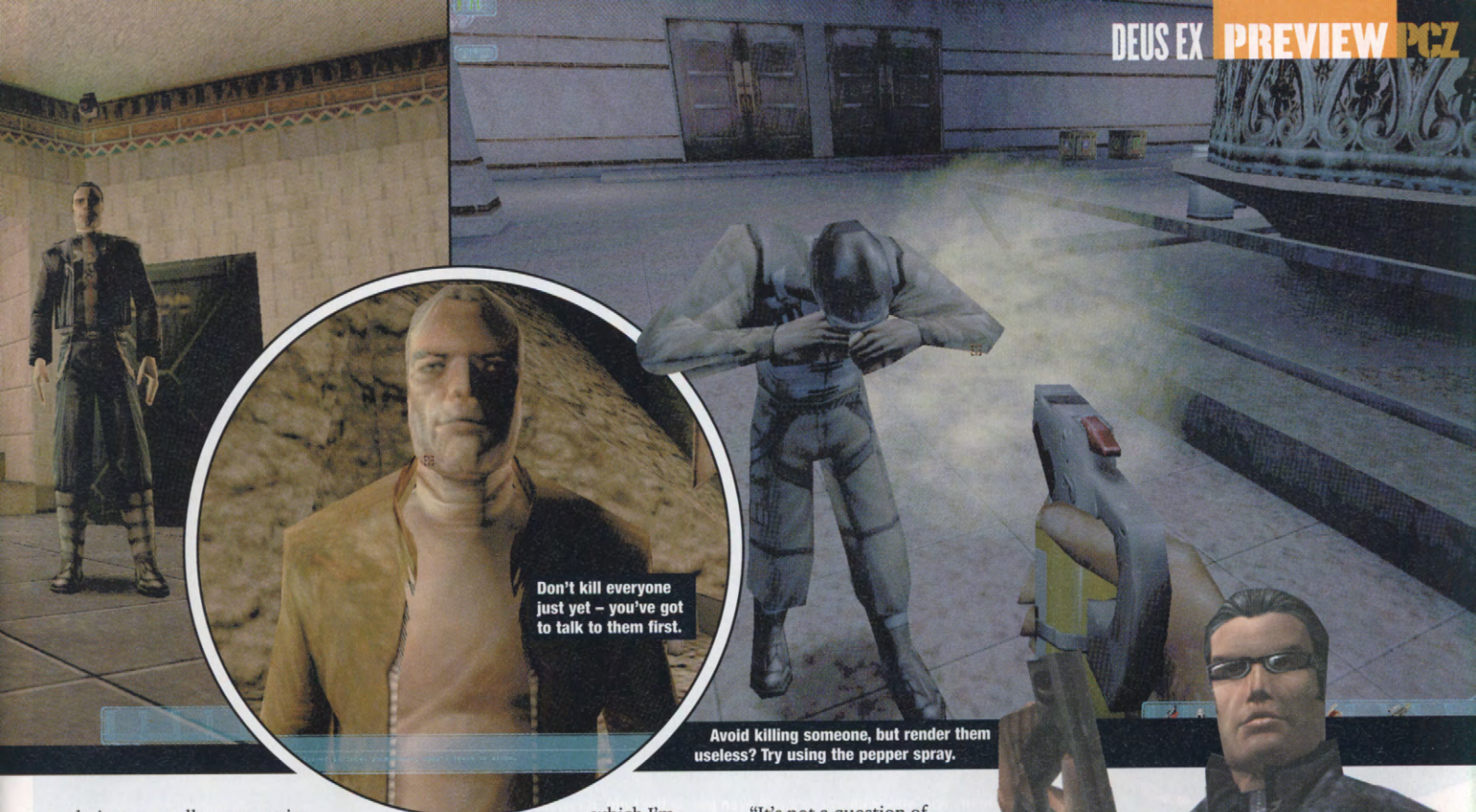
CV

ION STORM

So far we've had, erm, *Dominion* from Ion Storm, but the less said about that the better...

Dominion (1998) A ropery real-time strategy game that Ion Storm inherited from US development house disaster 7th Level.





Don't kill everyone just yet - you've got to talk to them first.

Avoid killing someone, but render them useless? Try using the pepper spray.

cross hairs get smaller as you aim on the target. That's a much more accurate - *oh damn!*" We wonder what happened.

"I did not want to do that. *Shit!* Sorry. I accidentally fired the gun trying to show you what I wanted to show you. *Damn.*" Warren seems a little trigger happy - not what we expected. He re-loads the level, pointing out that *Deus Ex* starts off in New York (on Liberty Island to be precise) passing through Hong Kong, Paris and various other exotic locations that are, at present, top secret.

"The two things we're working on right now," he says as the keyboard clatters, "are game balancing and communicating game goals. This game is *huge* - I mean it's, like, *really* large, and the story is very convoluted, so we're working with our testers to make the game flow. AI problems are easily tweakable, but where we *do* have a problem is when a player comes to a point in the game and says, 'I don't know what to do next - I do not know where I'm supposed to be going.' We're working really hard fine-tuning the detection range, combat difficulty, conversations, clues - and everything else - to keep play flowing."

GIVE US A CLUE

So what sort of clues are we likely to find in *Deus Ex*?

"We have so many ways of communicating with the player. Obviously, conversation plays a huge part in *Deus Ex*. We have over 150,000 lines of dialogue, which is... a lot. We have over 400 lines of dialogue devoted to context sensitive situations, so the player will know whether he's been noticed or not. We have a device called the Info Link,

which I'm going to show you in a minute. Your boss can get in touch with you anytime - he's seeing through your eyes. We have emails, newspapers, books, public bulletins, computer terminals, data cubes, which are a bit like floppy disks... lots of ways of communicating with the player."

But with all that information wouldn't there be a danger of the player missing something?

"We have emails, newspapers, books, public bulletins, computer terminals, data cubes, which are a bit like floppy disks... lots of ways of communicating with the player"

"No. Mmm... I guess it is possible to drunk-walk through the game. I *hope* it doesn't come to that, but even if you kill everybody - which is, like... stupid - or if you decide that you don't wanna look at any computers or any of that stuff, then you can, because all of the information is presented redundantly. There is literally never a case where there's only one way of finding something. We give you multiple opportunities to entice you away from blindly shooting your way through the game."

LEAD BALLOON

Back to the experiment with the sniper rifle and we're confronted by shaky cross hairs aimed at a man's head.

"This is a graphic example of how our skills work," Warren explains. "At the moment I'm completely unskilled with the rifle. I'm not touching the keyboard or the mouse, but look how it shakes. What do you think the odds are of hitting that guy?" Warren asks us. We tell him that practice makes perfect.

"It's not a question of practice! It's a case of accomplishing game goals. You solve a puzzle and you get given skill points, which you allocate to certain skill areas. Now watch..." He tries to enter a cheat using the keyboard. "Oh shit. That didn't work... Oh, it did. Right, now I am a master rifleman," he gestures down to some numbers at the bottom of the screen. "I think I have a better chance of hitting him

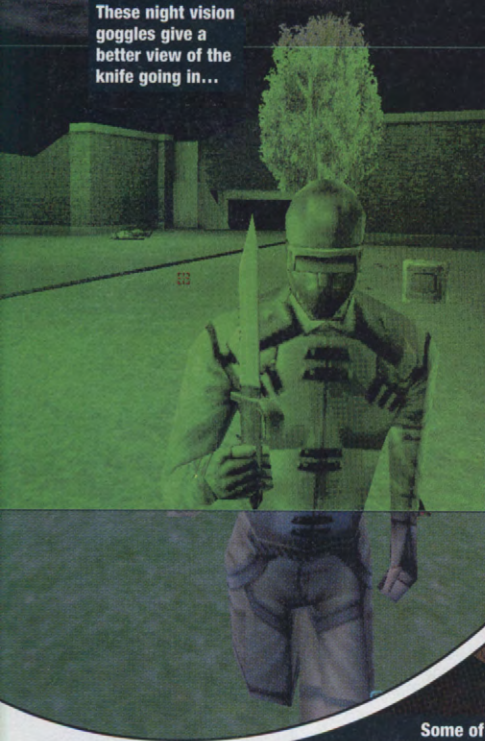
now." The cross hairs remain almost motionless, and aiming looks much easier. Curious, we ask how long it will take to progress from Bill Werbnyuk (*Canadian snooker player who drank ten pints of beer to steady his snooker arm - Ed*) to Steve Davis (*steady as a rock - Ed*).

"It depends on how you spend your skill points. You can generalise your skills and try to be pretty good at everything, or you can say, 'I wanna be very, very good at one thing.' If you choose to specialise in one discipline then that's fine with me - I really don't care how players accomplish goals to get through the game."

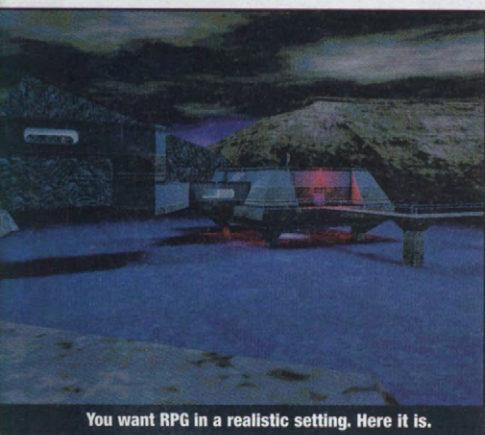
We asked Warren if it was possible to make it through the game without filling everyone full of bullets?

This is JC Denton - the lead character in the game. Mean lookin' mutha ain't he?

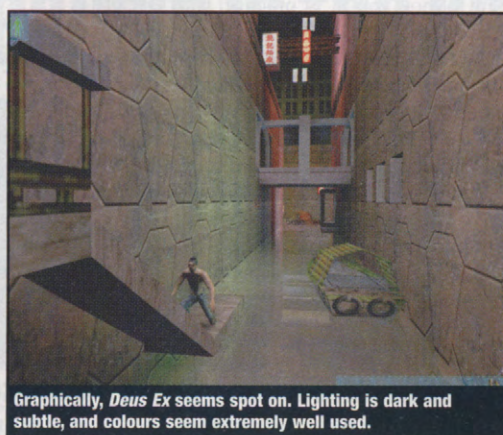
These night vision goggles give a better view of the knife going in...



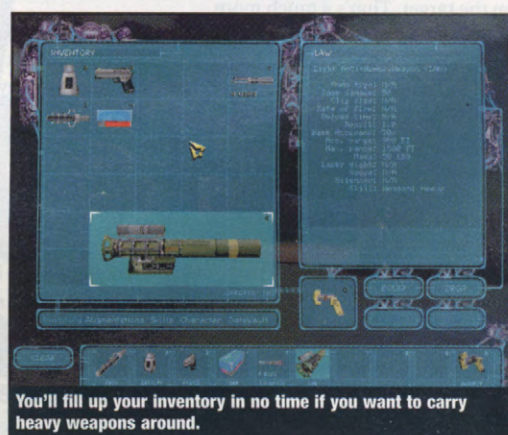
Some of the many non-player characters will even join in the fight, if requested.



You want RPG in a realistic setting. Here it is.



Graphically, *Deus Ex* seems spot on. Lighting is dark and subtle, and colours seem extremely well used.



You'll fill up your inventory in no time if you want to carry heavy weapons around.



"Yes and no. I almost hate to admit this because it's a failure. Next game we'll solve this problem - I couldn't figure out how to do it this time... There are certain characters who will be invulnerable - unkillable - up to a certain point. After that we say, 'Go ahead if you want - kill them.'

"The bottom line is that *Deus Ex* is a heavily story-oriented game. I really wanna tell a cool story and if a critical character dies in mission two, they're not going to be there to communicate critical information for mission six, and the game falls apart. I'm going to solve that problem soon. I don't know

how to do it yet..." We suggest the arrival of their next of kin to impart that information, but it goes down like a lead balloon and we move on.

"He drops his existing weapon and picks up the new one. It's a huge flamethrower, which he uses to torch a few hapless guys in the vicinity"

HEAD SHOT

Warren, still targeting his unwitting victim inside the now rock-steady cross hair, hits the left mouse button taking the poor guy's head off in the

process. At last, we're getting somewhere. "A headshot kills," he says.

"But when doesn't it these days, in games or real life?" says someone

cynically from behind him.

He continues, "Without the skill I would have had no chance to do that - not at that distance. But that's the way the whole game is set to work, right? You decide what you want to be good at. If I decided that I wanted to be the best rifle shot in the world I'd concentrate on that, on weapon modifications to reduce recoil, give you a laser sight, or increase your clip capacity. In this game you'll even be able to personalise your guns."

Was he going to include weapon degradation, like in *System Shock 2*?

"No, no, no. I loved *System Shock 2*, but weapon degradation is a bad idea."

It didn't ruin the game, we say. But Warren's not convinced. "I just think it frustrates players. The idea is to let players make a plan and execute it. Having your weapons degrade just makes it harder to have fun."

HEAVY WEAPONS

"Let's try this..." Warren types something and an object falls in front of him. A keystroke later and we're looking at what we presume to be the inventory. "See, look - I don't even have enough room in my inventory to pick it up!" He drops his existing weapon and picks up the new one. It's a huge flamethrower, which he uses to torch a few hapless guys in the vicinity.

"OK," he continues, "you'll notice that if you're carrying around heavy weapons you're not carrying around other stuff." He's right, the inventory is filled with the flamethrower. "The whole game is about making tough choices... about who you are in the world. You'll also notice how much slower I'm moving now, because of

DEUS BEFORE DAIKATANA?

Surely not?

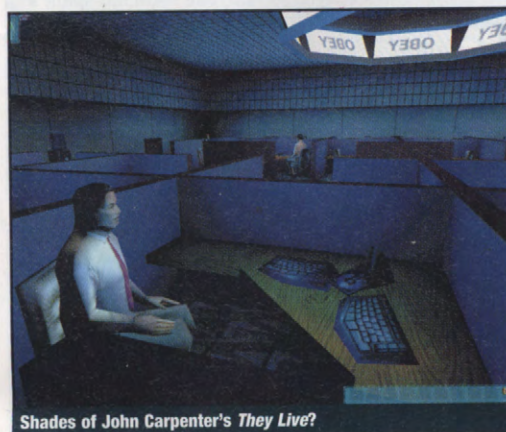
Unlikely as it may seem, the chances of *Deus Ex* hitting the shelves before *Daikatana* are extremely high. Ion Storm representatives hovering around during our *Deus Ex* demo said, "[John] Romero wants to get it right, and won't be rushed into releasing a game he's not happy with." The same, of course, goes for Warren Spector, although the *Deus Ex* team have resisted the temptation to over-hype the game in the same way Romero has done with *Daikatana*.



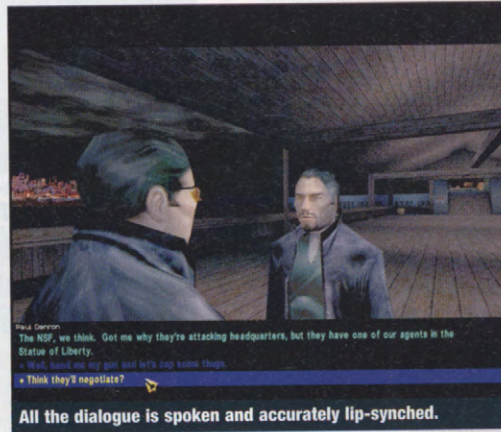
To avoid the lip-synch problem, all the characters wear welding masks... No, not really.



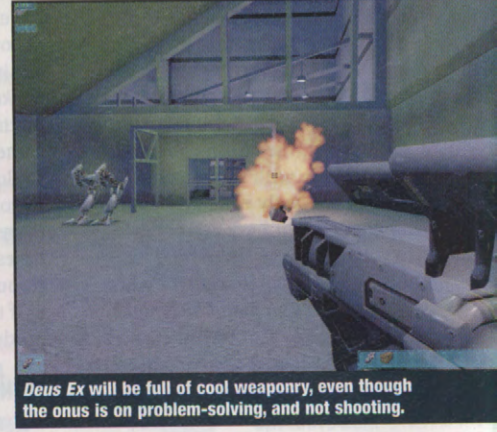
If you want to blast your way through the game, you're free to commit bloody carnage.



Shades of John Carpenter's *They Live*?



All the dialogue is spoken and accurately lip-synched.



Deus Ex will be full of cool weaponry, even though the onus is on problem-solving, and not shooting.

the weight of the weapon? If you wanna be the guy with the BFG, you're not gonna be rocket-jumping in this game, pal..."

Ah, but does the flamethrower get lighter as the fuel runs out?

"Boy!" he laughs, "you really are a bunch of realism freaks!" And as the laughs die down we're being shown something new.

"Lemme show you some other stuff..." Warren's feet are shuffling again. "I wanna show you this one character. This is a prison breakout mission. You start off in a cell and there's this one character that's been dogging you from the first mission. She's been taunting you and hating you and *really* giving you a hard time - she's called Anna Navarre."

He messes with a panel and escapes from the cell. "I'm out. And I'm crouching, I don't make a noise when I'm crouched." He slides up behind Anna, who's at the end of the room, and 'cattle-prods' her with some kind of incapacitator. "Thank you!" chirps Warren having delt her 2,000 volts.

She drops to the floor like a sack of spuds and Warren turns his attention to something else in the room. "That there is a camera, and that there is a turret," he points out. "If that camera spots me it's going to set off an alarm and all hell is going to break loose."

There are a number of ways I can approach this situation. If I had grenades I could destroy it and then it won't activate an alarm or that turret. Since I don't have any grenades I'm gonna use this device..." He equips an item that looks like a TV remote control. "This is a Multi Tool," he demonstrates, "I can use it to bypass electronic devices, including cameras..."

Warren activates the device which, depending on your skill level, allows rudimentary hacking of various electronic devices. He quickly bypasses the camera. "It took a while to do that and I used a fair amount of my Multi Tool capacity. Now let me show you some other things, only this time with advanced skills..."

ULTRA REALISTIC

Warren's eye-opening demonstration continues for some time, and it soon becomes apparent that *Deus Ex* is shaping up to be (dare we say it?) something of a classic (especially in this day and age, when PC ZONE Classics are few and far between). And, after having seen some more very cool, ultra realistic, role-playing unfold in front of our eyes, we can only conclude that there's no way in the world the developers can f**k it up.

But hold on, then we realise this is Ion Storm we're dealing with - anything could happen. Well, despite Ion Storm's much documented trials and tribulations recently, we are happy to report that development of *Deus Ex* has been relatively smooth and trouble free (*Touch wood* - Ed) and an almost finished version is now in the hands of play-testers. Amazing eh? So, all going well you can expect an exclusive review in the not too distant future. **PCZ**

Q&A

WARREN SPECTOR



One of the few geniuses in the games industry, Warren is the visionary mind behind the two *Ultima Underworlds* and the original

System Shock, among others.

PCZ What was the first game you ever played?

WS My first computer game was a *Star Trek* sim on the mainframe at a newspaper where I was working.

PCZ And favourite game of all time?

WS On PC or console, it'd have to be *Zelda*, *A Link To The Past* on the SNES.

PCZ What was the last game you paid money for?

WS *The Sims*. But I know what'll happen to me if I start playing it, so it's still in the box.

PCZ Have you ever been in a fight?

WS Last fight I got into was in junior high school. The guy was bigger than me. I lost.

It's nearing D-Day for...

SUDDEN STRIKE

After unexpectedly threatening industrial action, **Mark Hill** was told to start writing or face a court martial

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER CDV

PUBLISHER TBC

WEBSITE www.suddenstrike.de

OUT April

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ A German developed WWII RTS
- ★ No base building or resource management
- ★ Enormous maps with up to 1,000 units
- ★ Russian, German, French, American and English campaigns
- ★ Awesome scope for tactical development

Having built a strong reputation for abhorring real-time strategy games, it may seem strange to find me writing about one with some enthusiasm, but that is exactly what is about to happen. I might have cried, "What do you mean you can't play while it's paused?" in abject horror when I first played *Command & Conquer* and screamed, "But I'd just started building my base!" as I got massacred within seconds playing any of its clones. I might even have badly bruised my forehead after hitting the keyboard as I was bored unconscious by legion upon legion of 'build a base, mine resources, create 6,000 units, rush enemy base' games. But none of that matters, because there are two games regrouping over the horizon, ready to charge, that have restored my faith in the genre. One of them is *Shogun: Total War*, the other is *Sudden Strike*.

WAR IS HELL

So what could turn a staunch pacifist into an over-excited World War II strategist, sending thousands of conscripts to a 'death by tank' and re-writing one of the bloodiest chapters in recent history for the hell of it? Part of it, of course, is the setting. It's not that I have an unhealthy fascination with WWII, but seeing a massive landscape covered with soldiers, crawling with tanks, with bridges,

woods and villages providing more than just a background, and wide open spaces for troops to collide in a bloody mess is enough to light up anybody's imagination. The amount of detail is just staggering: barricades are wound in spiked wire, the trees come in a variety of types and sizes, you can spot lazy soldiers having a smoke and almost make out the jagged edges of the planks used in the construction of the houses.

And, thank god, there's no resource management. Apart from the expendable human resources, of course. In the way of turn-based affairs such as *Close Combat*, *Sudden Strike* has you concentrating strictly on the strategic side of things. The game will provide the depth to freely explore as many tactical avenues as your imagination allows. So there's no need to mess about with bases, sending collectors to mine resources and 'spewing out' soldiers as if they were green plastic toys on a production line. This is war, after all.

THINK TANK

Instead of the usual 'two factions battling over control for a planet', you get to play as the Russians, German, French, American or British, even recreating historical scenarios such as D-Day and Stalingrad. The developer has done its homework and faithfully reproduced the vehicles, artillery and planes from each country, which should please bellicose anoraks no end. With up to one thousand units in each scenario, things will be getting very hectic very quickly. This is a game that makes you think before you act and while you act. You

can see the whole map from the start, and fog of war only applies to seeing enemy units. It's not as though you've landed on some unknown alien planet, so exploration definitely takes a backseat role to deployment of your units on the terrain. Having the whole map visible from the start means you can focus on developing real strategies as soon as you begin

a mission instead of wasting time doing all those boring tasks RTS games have made us become accustomed to.

Although the developers are busy balancing realism with gameplay to ensure the experience remains a fun one, you have to keep things like the morale of your men and the amount of remaining ammo at the front of your mind. To make sure soldiers are more than disposable marionettes, the game allocates them experience points at the end of each mission, turning them into valuable assets as you progress through the campaigns. In addition, a clever resupplying system has ammo-carrying vehicles playing an essential role in the game. And that's just the start of it.

"And you can imagine how juicy things can get in multiplayer mode. With up to four teams and 12 players, a multiplayer session of *Sudden Strike* promises to be an unforgettable experience"

DIG YOUR OWN HOLE

Each mission has its own set of objectives, but there is always more than one way to succeed. Given the scope of things to do, that is hardly surprising. You can hide snipers inside a building and have them shoot out of the windows as enemy troops parade down the street. You can send in explosive experts to blow up a bridge that will disrupt enemy operations or send in the builders to cross over rivers. You can call in air support to bomb the opposition, do a quick reconnaissance fly-over or drop some paratroopers where they're least expecting a fight. You can lay mines in a field that you know is going to be

crossed by an oncoming army, and carefully position M.A.S.H. units to patch up your men and send them out to battle again.

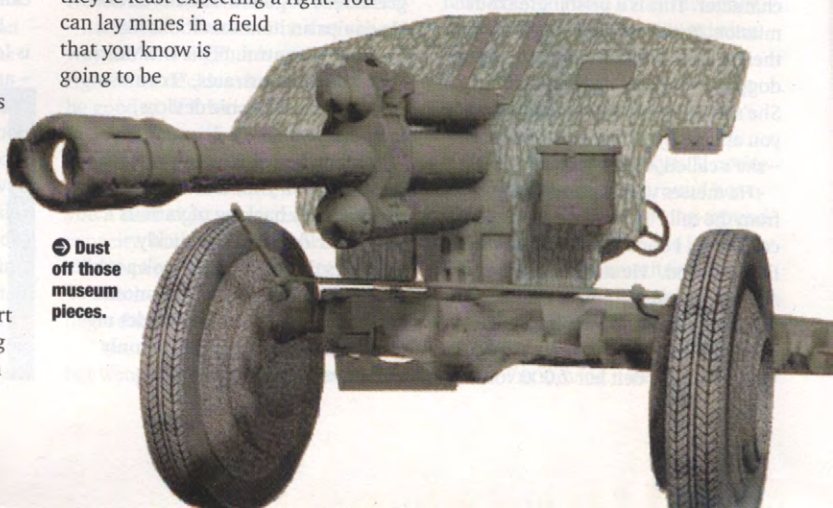
And you can imagine how juicy things can get in multiplayer mode. With up to four teams and 12 players, a multiplayer session of *Sudden Strike* promises to be an unforgettable experience. Like Martin Loehlein, the game's development manager, says: "Sudden Strike multiplayer is unlike any other RTS game that I have played so far." The team has spent a lot of time working on this aspect of the game to ensure that it works just right. "An RTS without a production part has its very own challenges," says Martin before reassuring us that they have come up with the perfect

solutions to each of those tests and created an intense and satisfying game. "The panic that your units experience in some of the situations transfers directly to the player. You should have seen the face of my colleague the moment I started to dig up his fortifications with my howitzer and he had no idea where those shells were coming from." Yes, well, quite.

Hopefully, you should be able to try it out yourself (if you can find a suitable colleague) when, fingers crossed, we bring you the exclusive demo and review next month. **PCZ**

UPDATE

➔ Dust off those museum pieces.

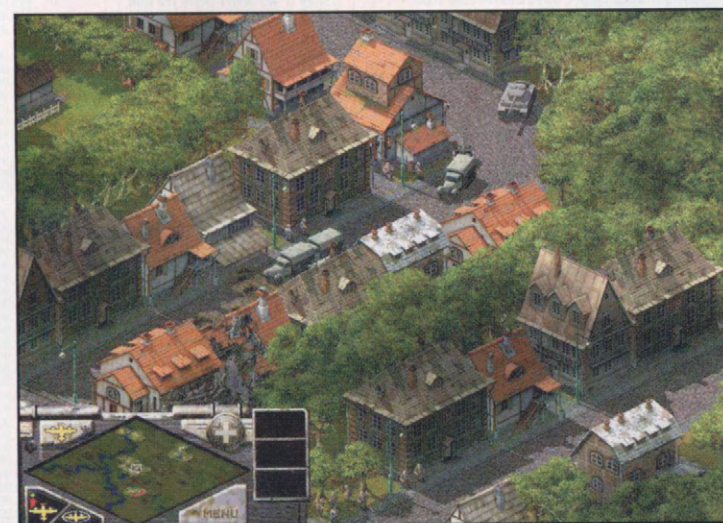




Bombing bridges can be a very useful tactic. Just don't do it to your own.



Hiding in the bushes: these tanks just haven't got what it takes to make it in a war.



A quaint provincial town, seconds before it's turned into rubble.

Decorate the landscape with craters. Or you could try hitting the opposition.



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Here is just a taster of some of the units you'll find in the game. We won't bore you with the full stats for each one, but we can tell you they have been comprehensively researched and realistically recreated

RUSSIAN



T-26

Weight: 10.25 tons. Crew: 3. Max Speed: 30km.



KV-1

Weight: 47.50 tons. Crew: 5. Max Speed: 34km.



T-34-85

Weight: 32 tons. Crew: 5. Max Speed: 55km.



SU-85

Weight: 29.60 tons. Crew: 4. Max Speed: 55km.

GERMAN



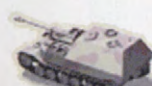
Tank V 'Panther'

Weight: 44.80 tons. Crew: 5. Max Speed: 46km.



Heavy Tank VI 'Tiger'

Weight: 56.90 tons. Crew: 5. Max Speed: 45km.



Tank destroyer Elefant

Weight: 68 tons. Crew: 6. Max Speed: 20km.



Motorcycle BMW R-75

Weight: 0.41 tons. Crew: 2. Max Speed: 92km.

ENGLISH



M4A4 'Sherman V'

Weight: 32.21 tons. Crew: 6. Max Speed: 41km.



Cruiser Tank Comet

I. Weight: 35.74 tons. Crew: 5. Max Speed: 46km.

AMERICAN



Multiple gun motor carriage M16

Weight: 8.98 tons. Crew: 6. Max Speed: 72km.



Willys MB jeep

Weight: 1.02 tons. Crew: 2. Max Speed: 104km.



D-Day or the first 30 minutes from *Saving Private Ryan*?



"Oh! That's just great. How we gonna get across now?"



An occupied village puts up no resistance. Must be French.



"Move along now, there's nothing to see here."

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Alec Guinness will not be appearing.



Four of the planned missions are based on the islands of the Pacific and there's even an elephant that can be ridden. Really.



Every part of this battleship can be entered.



Players can have up to six cameras open on-screen at once and can zoom in and out to show great detail.



Might be best to swim underwater here.

COMMANDOS 2

**FIRST
ENCOUNTER**

Who wants to play, war-orr? **Richie Shoemaker** heads back to the playground

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Pyro Studios
PUBLISHER Eidos
WEBSITE www.eidos.co.uk
OUT November

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ The graphics and animation are rather good
- ★ Incredible new missions, with extra characters, weapons, vehicles and skills
- ★ Allied troops to control and you *might* be able to play as Germans in multiplayer games
- ★ It won't be as tricky as the original *Commandos*

A sweeping generalisation it may well be, but unlike us high and mighty tommy Englander pig-dogs, Germans seem quite comfortable pulling their cultural skeletons out of the wardrobe. Take the subject of war for instance; when it comes to computer games where Nazis get killed on screen, they love it.

Just to back up my point, the original *Commandos* has sold more than two million copies worldwide, 500,000 of which were bought by

people with mullets. That's a lot of mullets, I think you'll agree.

Anyway, *Commandos 2* is coming out and it looks great. As before, the aim is to get your covert specialists through the war alive, and at the same time save prisoners, blow bridges and generally disrupt the German war effort from behind enemy lines.

Returning for a second tour of duty are the characters from game one, each of whom will have been through some extra training, meaning they'll have new skills to make use of – such as being able to swim underwater. Three new characters will be making their debut (a thief, a lady called Natasha and, maybe, a dog), as will a number of walk-in parts from regular soldiers, which players will be able to control, albeit with limitations. The idea, it seems, is to give players a few characters at whose loss the game doesn't have to be restarted. Obviously, such troops, though handy in firefight, shouldn't be relied upon to do a commandos work.

The intelligence of the Germans has been beefed up considerably, with

a noticeable difference in behaviour between the German ranks. Officers will point and shout and will always graciously let his NCOs into a room before himself – usually into a hail of bullets – fun to watch if nothing else.

Pyro are aiming for approximately 70 to 80 hours of gameplay, so the

“Returning for a second tour of duty are the characters from game one, each of whom will have been through some extra training”

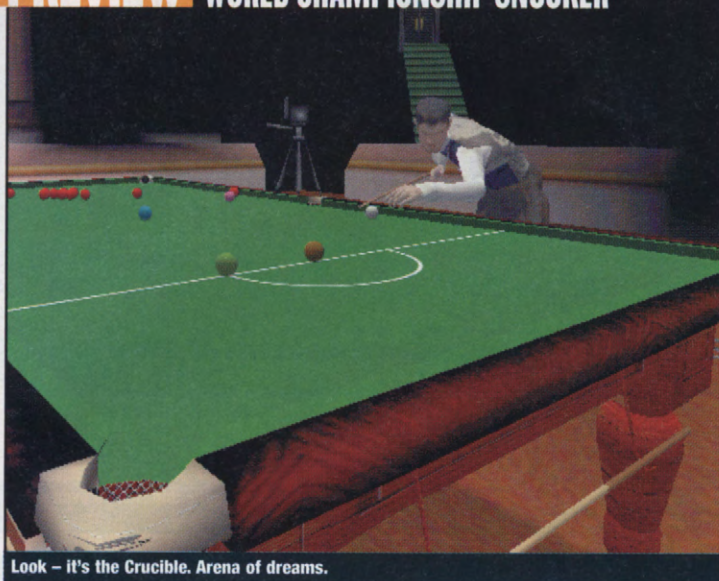
number of missions could change from the planned 12, but considering the size of the levels (one even accurately maps the entire grounds of Colditz Castle) that seems unlikely.

As well as the Colditz mission, there is plenty that borrows from the war movies of our youth. There's a nod to the final battle of *Saving Private Ryan*, a few choice moments from *Where Eagles Dare*, plus a rather

famous bridge across the river Kwai (hopefully your task is to blow it rather than build it).

Vehicles will be more integral to success this time around, and there'll be more of them. Taking control of the tank will of course be the highlight, and if you manage to crew it with two of your men, you can make short work of any retreating Germans. Watching the turret cannon recoil while the tank rolls back on its tracks is truly a work of art in terms of animation.

Commandos 2, though some months away, is certainly worth getting excited about. The fact that you can choose which characters you want to take on each mission, as well as start each mission in a number of different places, just goes to show how much Pyro has listened to fans of the original game. We are promised an easier time of it this time around, with a rich and fully interactive environment to play toy soldiers in. If you're British, you're going to love it. If you're German, as I partially am, you're going to love it even more. **PCZ**



Look – it's the Crucible. Arena of dreams.



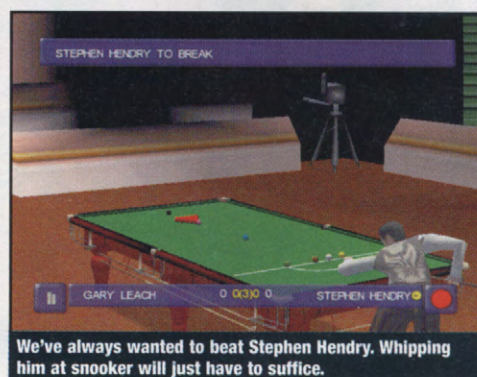
Work your way up from the deserted practice rooms to the home of snooker, er, Sheffield.



World Championship Snooker's new cueing system could even help you with your real game.



Snooker isn't an easy game – let's face it, we've always been better at pocket billiards.



We've always wanted to beat Stephen Hendry. Whipping him at snooker will just have to suffice.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Codemasters
PUBLISHER Codemasters
WEBSITE www.codemasters.com
OUT April

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Features 20 of the world's best players, accurately portrayed
- ★ Revolutionary new cueing technique
- ★ Realistic recreations of famous venues, such as the Crucible
- ★ Career mode
- ★ Referee speaks and everything!

Anyone with any sense who's ever watched *Big Break* probably hates snooker with a vengeance. Still, that's Jim Davidson for you and nothing to do with snooker itself, which as everyone knows is full of even more heroics, excitement and tension than football. OK, so you might take some convincing on that one, but it's a fact that snooker is still one of the most watched sports in the UK.

Oddly, there haven't been many snooker simulations on the PC, which is ironic because, like computers, snooker abides by logic: balls react with each other under the predetermined law of physics. So, they don't do anything particularly

weird, and they certainly don't explode. As far as the PC is concerned, all you have to do is get the physics calculations spot on and you're onto a winner.

Unfortunately, this conjures up a valid dilemma: why pay 30 odd quid for a simulation when you can play the real thing down the pub for a pound? The answer? In real life you're unlikely to entice 'Rocket' Ronnie O'Sullivan, Stephen Hendry, or Dennis Taylor down the pub for a quick frame. *World Championship Snooker* will allow you to do just that – and more.

As well as your usual array of single and multiplayer tournaments, WCS career mode lets you work your way up from the dingy, smoke-filled halls of Doncaster to the exotic Crucible Theatre in Sheffield where you can battle it out against the true kings of the sport.

Is it even better than the real thing? Here's *Keith Pullin* to give you the spin...

The top 20 ranking players (with the notable exception of Jimmy White – something to do with his own brand no doubt) are included, and not only that, they're all motion captured and exhibit recognisable mannerisms, characteristics and playing styles – although you will need a 21inch monitor to fit in Dennis Taylor's specs. There's even a referee who speaks, and rumour has it that

to be so lifelike it will even help you with your real game. Generally speaking, we thought 'normal' people never managed a break higher than 15, so whether it's actually that realistic is debatable.

Anyway, it makes you wonder: if snooker simulations are going to be this damn good, we'll never want to play for real again. Think about it: no vomiting on the table; the balls

“In real life you're unlikely to entice 'Rocket' Ronnie O'Sullivan, Stephen Hendry, or Dennis Taylor down the pub for a quick frame. WCS will allow you to do that”

John Virgo is to lend his silky voice to the commentary.

Codemasters, the developer, has also implemented a revolutionary cueing interface with full spin tactics that it claims will help you notch up bigger breaks. The system is reputed

will never get those ridiculous nicks caused by sticky bits of chalk and fluff and stuff; and nobody will ever whack you round the head with their cue and then glass you when they lose. Abolish real-life snooker. Long live computer simulations. **PCZ**

FIRST
ENCOUNTER

ALLEGIANCE

Is it *Freespace*? Is it *Homeworld*? No, it's a Microsoft game! Philip Wand looks at the latest online space craze

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Microsoft Research Games (MSRG)
PUBLISHER Microsoft
WEBSITE www.microsoft.com/games/allegiance
OUT Summer 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Action straight from *FreeSpace 2*
- ★ Commanders have a bird's eye, *Homeworld*-style interface
- ★ Teams can have up to 100 players, all with voice chat
- ★ Beta version available for free download

Set in space amidst wormholes and space debris, *Allegiance* gives players the chance to carry out a wide range of team duties, ranging from turret gunner to capital ship captain, and to fly 18 different craft armed with 20 different weapons. Stunning planetary backdrops, nebulae and supernovas all add to the action and, as in *Team Fortress 2*, the commander role allows wannabe tacticians to oversee team progress, issue orders and apportion resources from a familiar top-down, real-time strategy perspective.

The *Allegiance* plot goes something like this: towards the middle of next century, an asteroid bumps into Earth and obliterates pretty much everything. Just beforehand, though, scientists discover a vast network of wormholes that allow people to up their stakes

without doubt the bane of the genre, Microsoft has added side thrusters. This allows ships to strafe left and right across the X-axis, lending combat an almost *Half-Life*-like precision and making enemy encounters a lot less aggravating because of it.

There are already a number of online titles that encourage team-based play, along with a few others due for release some time later this year. The ones that really work – the ones you'll be itching to play come this time next year – are those that allow casual gamers and newbies to get sucked in just as deep as the die-hard game-head. Getting things 'just so' is difficult but not impossible: witness the colossal popularity of *Counter-Strike* and *Team Fortress Classic*.

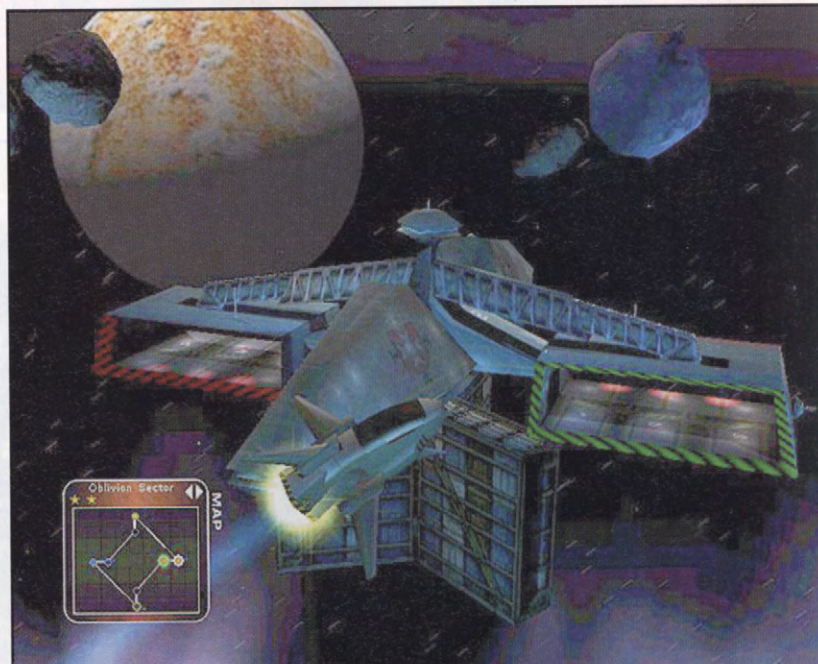
In *Allegiance*, everything is shared among the team, meaning people have to co-operate or it all falls apart. At the start of every game, individual resources are funnelled to the commander, who then decides how best to use them (Microsoft assures us that this feature can be switched off, preventing idiots from ruining the game and, if enough of you decide your commander is rubbish, you can mutiny.) And if you research improved technology, you'll know that everyone else will have access to it also.

“With so many of today's gamers exhibiting all the symptoms of attention deficit disorder, Microsoft has been careful to include game variations”

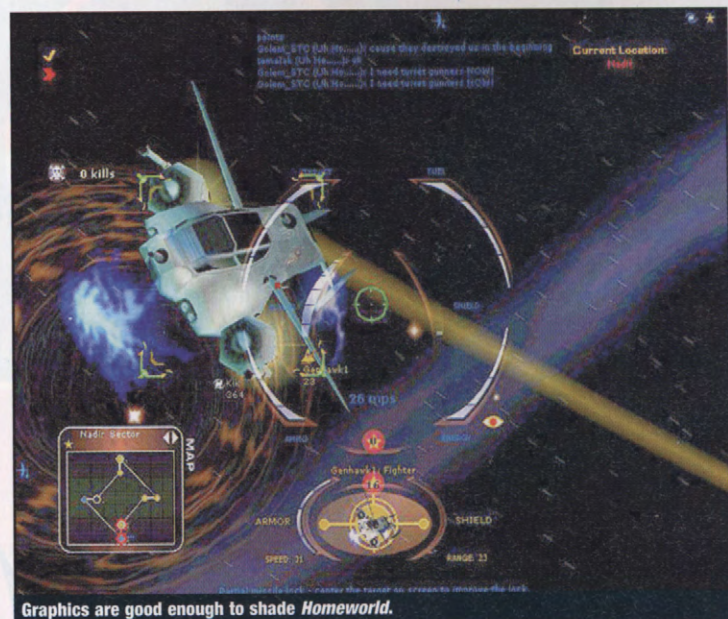
and leave – and it's at this point that you're asked to pledge your allegiance to one of the three emerging factions: The Iron Coalition, GigaCorp, or The Bios. The Iron Coalition is a peacekeeping force made up from the remnants of the UN; GigaCorp is a large corporation focused on universal domination; The Bios are genetically engineered loony-toons out to destroy anything that isn't another genetically engineered loony-toon. Each has its own strengths and weaknesses.

Zero gravity fans will be glad to hear that the gameplay physics are pure Newtonian, and thus pretty much standard fare for a game set in space. But to do away with those perpetually circling dogfights,

With so many of today's gamers exhibiting all the symptoms of attention deficit disorder, Microsoft has been careful to include game variations that allow players with pressure cooker thyroids to get a quick fix of dog-fighting action with none of that plot and strategy pig-poo. Head for the *Allegiance* section of the MSN Gaming Zone, and you'll be up against hundreds of other people whose hyperactive reflexes are matched only by their ability to swear and cuss when beaten. Both deathmatch and capture the flag (CTF) types provide hours of satisfying arcade action and, as in the full game, it should be a rewarding experience for everyone. [W]



Asteroids and planets heap on the atmosphere.



Graphics are good enough to shade *Homeworld*.



Dynamic lighting makes other craft oh-so-real.



Plasma bolts streak away from a heavy fighter's guns.



The engine adapts to suit the system you're running and the number of creatures on-screen.



Remember *Doom*? Well, these crustaceans attack in massive swarms.



You don't have to take the gung-ho approach. Use your brains and the local vegetation to your advantage.



The 3D engine is capable of recreating the huge outdoors without splitting the level into sub-loads.



Three on one – we don't care how big your claws are, you're going down.

EVOLVA

Absorbing, mutating, exploding and laying eggs, *Dave Woods* tries them all...

FIRST ENCOUNTER

Genetic engineering – don't mess with it. That's our advice anyway. It might promise you the freedom to drink and smoke as much as you want, safe in the knowledge that you can replace your used and abused bits with healthy organs purchased from your local butchers, but where's it all going to end? Compulsory brain transplants to create a servile race of co-operative workers, that's what we reckon, although *Evolva's* got a radically different spin on proceedings.

Set in the 'future' (no, really?), human beings have cracked the genetic code and created the ultimate warrior, the Genohunter. The

Genohunter can absorb any creature, analyse its DNA and mutate itself to incorporate any abilities it thinks might come in handy later on. Which is lucky, because a parasite has arrived and it's intent on destroying our planet by laying eggs and using an explosive force to spread its offspring.

As an *Evolva* (military commander), it's your job to control a shipload of Genohunters and absorb, mutate and destroy any parasite that gets in your face. So we're talking about a shoot 'em up then? Well, yes, but the origins of *Evolva* mean that it could prove to be something rather special.

It's being developed by Computer Artworks, a British company headed by renowned computer artist William Latham. This means the visuals are about as good as you can expect to see on your PC, and because they're

dynamically scaleable, they adapt to suit your machine and enable dozens of creatures on-screen at any one time. If you shed a tear for the legions of *Doom* every time you go to bed, *Evolva* could be the stuff of new nightmares to come.

But, along with ensuring the visuals in *Evolva* are going to be absolutely top-notch, the technology behind the company could make it one of the most exciting and original releases of the year. Customising the

Genohunters isn't merely a marketing term – apparently there are more than one billion variations, and quite often it's essential to mutate to get past certain puzzles in the game.

This means that no two people will ever share exactly the same experience, although you can email the DNA of your

creations to your mates, or you can keep them to yourself and challenge others to multiplayer duels in specially built arenas.

“Because the visuals are dynamically scaleable, they adapt to suit your machine and enable dozens of creatures on-screen at any one time”

Computer Artworks' artificial intelligence technology also promises creatures that react in a realistic fashion, along with fully interactive environments with ice that melts and vegetation that can be torched. Ambitious? Naturally, but we've just sat through a one and a half hour demo of preview code, and it looks pretty damn impressive. Expect a full review and interactive demo next month, but in the meantime, check out the movie on this month's CD. **EF**

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Computer Artworks

PUBLISHER Virgin Interactive

WEBSITE www.artworks.co.uk

OUT April

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Mutate your team with more than one billion variations
- ★ Exchange teams or play head-to-head with friends
- ★ Shooter with strategic and puzzle elements
- ★ Dynamic scaleable graphics
- ★ Fully interactive environments

FROM THE MAKERS OF **GRAND PRIX 2** AND **GRAND PRIX 3**...
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PC CD-ROM



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NAME Terry Anslow

AGE 52

OCCUPATION Chief Investigator at the European Leisure Software Publishers Association's (ELSPA) Crime Unit.

OBSESSION Tracking down some of the 'top dogs' in the piracy trade, getting them nicked, and then banged up.

CONDITION BEGAN Two years ago when he retired from the police force. Because of his investigative skills (oh, and his love for computer games), Terry landed the job of heading up ELSPA's Crime Unit.

HISTORY OF CONDITION The Crime Unit has become something of a success story for ELSPA – since he joined, Terry and his team have never lost a case and work closely alongside the Police, Trading Standards and Customs to track down pirates.

OUTLOOK If the software pirates had their way, game production would soon dry up. And we'd be out of a job...

Got a penchant for dealing in bent software? Enjoy ripping off the latest games and making a packet out of somebody else's hard work? Then Terry Anslow will probably be knocking on your door soon...

★ WORDS Adam Phillips

Stop denying it. You're probably as guilty as the next gamer. Fact: nearly everyone at some point in their gaming career has gone round to a mate's house, played on their latest purchase and greedily thought: "Bugger, I can't afford this game at the moment but I have to have a copy. Now." After you pleaded with your mate, he ran off a copy for you. And you skulked off home, loaded up that ripped off piece of software on your Spectrum/Commodore 64/Atari ST/Apple Mac/PC, felt a tad guilty for all of five seconds, and then proceeded to play the game into the wee hours.

Unfortunately, the more serious side of piracy is big business and it's doing lasting damage to the future of software development. You see, the industry may currently make £1 billion from selling games to us law-abiding customers, but it also loses £3 billion to piracy – from the wee guys who beg for a copy off a mate, to serious criminals hell-

bent on making money by copying games and selling them onto us, the seemingly ever-eager public. And in the process the developer gets screwed out of its hard-earned cash.

It's for this very reason that ELSPA started the Crime Unit back in '94. And why Terry Anslow, its current chief investigator, is so passionate about his job. A former rozzer who spent 32 years in the force, he's had a fair bit of time at the thin end of the wedge, working in drug squads and bomb squads in London. Heavy stuff indeed, and perfect credentials for tracking down some of the notorious game pirates that have become so prevalent among the UK's criminal fraternity (see 'You're Nicked!' boxout on page 62).

With a team of seven investigators scattered up and down the country, it's Terry's job to co-ordinate their actions and,

with the help of the police, get results. So how do his investigations usually start? "Basically, we have a hotline here, which is the source of the majority of our work. Anyone can ring up and provide information anonymously or otherwise," explains Terry. "We get all sorts of people phoning up – retailers are an obvious source of information as well as publishers. We also get people who are trying to knock their competition out. We even get irate wives! Finally, we get a lot of genuine people who are incensed by the increase in piracy and by the amount of money that these pirates are making from it."

He and his team try to extract as much information out of the caller as possible: where the software pirate works, what he's doing and, most importantly, where he's selling the stuff. If Terry thinks the call warrants further investigation, he and his investigators will create a piracy report and the

real investigation begins. Because the Crime Unit isn't an 'official' law enforcement agency, like the Police,

"A former rozzer who spent 32 years in the force, he's had a fair bit of time at the thin end of the wedge working in drug squads and bomb squads"

Trading Standards or Customs, it has to create a solid case to take to the authorities, who can then act on the evidence.

"All my staff are experienced police or Trading Standards officers to start with, so they are used to doing investigations of this type," offers Terry. "We use all sorts of methods to get the 'purchase' and based on that evidence, once we have the purchase, we might have to knock on people's doors, meet them in pubs or at computer fairs and the like. We will go anywhere and try anything to establish whether an illegal trade or business is in operation. This process is helped by the pirate's greed. The criminal fraternity involved have got to come out at some point and get their money – if they want the cash for the items they're selling, then they have to put their head above the



Before: shiny, happy pirate discs blissfully unaware of the fate that awaits them.



After: the pirate discs have met their maker – Christmas decorations anyone?

YOU'RE NICKED!

PC ZONE raided the case histories at the Crime Unit to give you a taste of what the software piracy scene is really like...

★ In December 1999, the Crime Unit entered a shop in Stetchford with the police and found over 40 machines in operation, hidden behind a false wall, producing counterfeit products.

★ Sheffield has such a piss poor record, according to Trading Standards enforcement, that ELSPA and the police have joined forces to attack the problem, making over 40 arrests in 1999 in one market area alone.

★ Two separate raids were carried out in Manchester in one week – crack cocaine was found at both locations and, at one house a firearm was uncovered.

★ 8,000 exceptionally well-produced games came into the UK and were traced because one didn't work in Kent. Investigators subsequently recovered over 6,000

copies. The discs were made in a factory in Taiwan and it is believed that the boxes, manuals and covers were produced in Europe. Raids were then conducted in Taiwan at the request of ELSPA. The product was of such a high standard that it even fooled a large high street chain...

★ A major drug dealer conducting his business in the West Midlands was investigated by the National Crime Squad and, after a raid with ELSPA and MCPS assistance, a huge amount of counterfeit discs were found, including a state-of-the-art copier capable of producing 20 copies at a time.

★ Early in 1999, the Royal Ulster Constabulary stepped up its investigations into counterfeiting in the province.

They recognised that many paramilitary figures were moving into software piracy and using the proceeds to fund their activities. Extra emphasis and resources were ploughed into investigations, with ELSPA co-operating at an increased level. In the month of November 1999, they carried out 14 separate raids and recovered 10,835 counterfeit PlayStation discs – representing a staggering retail loss to the industry of £433,400.

★ Internationally, there are several 'hotspots' when it comes to software piracy. The former Soviet Union is a good example: one estimate two years ago stated that only one single legitimate example of a product actually went into that area and then everything else was copied from that one import...



The Usenet Warez FAQ - Introduction-

Welcome to alt.binaries.warez.ibm-pc and the other warez-related groups. ABWL is the world's largest software evaluation library and is dedicated to the preservation of warez for EVERYONE. In the interest of education, the Warez (pronounced "warez") Community is bringing you these Frequently Asked Questions and guidelines for acceptable conduct. We wish to recognize the contributions of the **Inner Circle** to this document.

Q: Why should I read this lengthy FAQ?

A: Because this warez group is much more complicated than most other newsgroups. Therefore, there are more procedures to know and guidelines to observe. This FAQ is your guide to survival in Usenet Warez. Even more important is the fact that incorrect postings hurt everyone. The Usenet is a very big place. Posts which are faulty or which do not belong in a group simply increase the traffic. They also increase the requests for reports and the actual reports from those people who try to be helpful. All of this can cause the forest to get lost in the trees. If you wish to be a responsible Usenet netizen, and you would like the usefulness of the group to continue, you can only profit from following these simple guidelines.

alt.binaries.warez.* (28 groups)	
alt.binaries.warez.amiga	678
alt.binaries.warez.atari	8
alt.binaries.warez.atari-st	6
alt.binaries.warez.autocad	1821
alt.binaries.warez.cbm	321
alt.binaries.warez.consoles	6
alt.binaries.warez.crypto	4
alt.binaries.warez.educational	832
alt.binaries.warez.ibm-pc	31887
alt.binaries.warez.ibm-pc.* (6 groups)	
alt.binaries.warez.ibm-pc.0-day	57
alt.binaries.warez.ibm-pc.d	496
alt.binaries.warez.ibm-pc.dos	426
alt.binaries.warez.ibm-pc.encrypted	2909
alt.binaries.warez.ibm-pc.games	7800
alt.binaries.warez.ibm-pc.old	4140
alt.binaries.warez.linux	1067

Warez – the bane of any anti-piracy advocate. Used massively for pushing out illegal copies of the latest releases, it's quite literally a virtual nightmare for any software publisher.

DOB 'EM IN!

Crime Unit hotline number:
0990 133 405



parapet. And hopefully we'll be there to knock them off."

Once enough evidence has been gathered, it's time to make the arrests. It's another part of the process that Terry and his team are involved in: "It's co-ordinated by whichever agency is executing the warrant – Police, Customs or Trading Standards – but basically once a warrant has been taken out, we go along to offer purely expert advice. We turn up on the doorstep with the agency, enter the premises with them and we advise the officers in the case about what to seize, what is infringing copyright and trademark legislation, and give them some computer expertise on how to seize things so that it complies with the law."

This approach has been highly successful – after all, the team have never lost a case since Terry joined, and they raised some 2,300 piracy reports last year alone. So what can a

software pirate expect when he finds himself in court, pleading guilty to the judge? A long stretch? A heavy fine? According to Terry, it varies dramatically: "One day in November, a man in South Wales was convicted with 330 discs and a computer system. He was given a £150 fine, payable at £5 a week, plus everything was destroyed," states Terry. "On the same day, in a court in Hull, we had a man on a first conviction who was in possession of fewer discs, and he was sentenced to six months in prison. That is the difference – it varies up and down the country."

Because of this disparity though, ELSPA is trying to get the copyright act sorted out because "it's a mess". "At the moment, software piracy can land you in jail for up to two years," says Terry. "We want software piracy to be recognised as the same as theft and brought up to a seven-year sentence.

Not for one minute would I expect a seven-year sentence to be imposed, as they aren't with normal theft cases, but it would put piracy on the same par as stealing someone's property."

Fair enough, we reckon. But what about those gamers who copy the odd game? Are they breaking the law? "It is not a criminal offence," offers Terry. "In order to prove trademark infringement, you must show that the individual is trading or running a business."

But he does believe that there is an even bigger deterrent for those of us



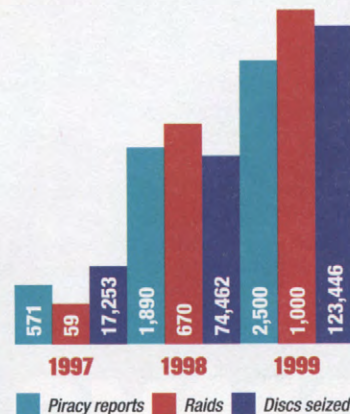
A SLIPPERY SLOPE?

It's not all good news – figures show that piracy is still on the increase (admittedly in line with sales). Cast an eye over these figures...

ELSPA says it intends to tackle the mounting problem in several ways: by educating the buyers about the harm piracy is causing the industry, by continuing to target the top dogs on the piracy scene, and by persevering with ELSPA's campaign to have jail sentences increased in order to provide a deterrent for wannabe pirates.

who don't want to shell out for a full-price game and who would rather get our hands on a ripped-off copy from a market stall. "People have got to realise that we have one of the best industries in the world at the moment and we're trying to keep it that way," explains Terry. "Unfortunately, the university youths and the kids are the ones who are creating this market for the criminals. They've got to ask themselves if they want a Far East-type economy, ie poor production, poor copies, no development – basically robbing somebody else's idea. The majority of English people would say that they don't want that. Getting that message across is the important thing."

However, there is the age-old argument from certain quarters that the software companies are bringing it on themselves – by charging too much money for their goods and so forcing people to get their hands on games from a cheaper source: "Yes, people often throw that back at us but it's not true," offers Terry. "The games are priced because of the investment that is involved, but then people complain about the 'obscene' profits that the companies make. Well, look at the obscene profits that the criminal



fraternity are making! They pay 40p to create the disc that's costing you between £5-15. That's a far more obscene profit, especially when you realise that the money made is going towards drugs, child prostitution, paramilitary groups and so forth (see 'You're Nicked!' boxout). That is far more obscene to me than talking about huge conglomerates earning millions after investing hundred of thousands of pounds in developing a particular title."

For someone who is obviously passionate about his job, does Terry ever get to play games himself? "I used to! In fact, that was what sparked my application for the job. I hadn't a clue what ELSPA was and didn't know much about the games industry – other than I used to buy the games. I have eight-year-old twin boys who are heavily into the PlayStation and games, as you can imagine. I just don't get the time to play games – but I do like the driving titles more than anything else."

And, of course, there are other benefits to being a crime fighter for the software industry: "I did have a bonus last summer when we launched our poster campaign – a cuddle off the live Lara. One of the perks of the job..."

Amen. [K]

THE PIRATE'S POV

Some punters pirate games for the money. Others claim they are doing us all a big favour as this online outburst illustrates

"If you think about it, and the software companies get things their own way and all piracy is stopped dead in its tracks, you and I will be completely screwed. The manufacturers realise that the majority of software sales are from first-time buyers. That's the cash cow. If you have no way of checking the quality of their products, then the marketing geniuses have to sell you the idea of the product and the sales will come rolling in regardless of product quality. Since you can't return the product after trying it, they can't lose. We would be at the total mercy of software publishers, marketing geniuses and salesmen. Which is where we almost are now.

"Piracy has made some software available for us to evaluate and helped to allow those of us who have access to it to make an informed purchase. Tough luck for the rest of you. Who will enforce the fraudulent claims made by many publishers and sales people about the performance of their product? As a pirate, I feel I am doing the public a service by letting them try something before they waste their money."

Part of an article written by a pirate and posted online

WWW WOES

The Net's global access is making piracy even more insidious

It was bad enough when it was just pirates flogging their local wares in a pub somewhere in Surrey. Then the Internet arrived, turning the whole thing into a global market. The Crime Unit has a dedicated Internet investigator to trawl through newsgroups and websites looking for potential leads for tracking down pirates.

Terry is already looking at plans to draw up a code of conduct for server owners to follow. In the meantime, he's been in contact with ELSPA's US counterpart, the ISDA, about tackling the mounting problem internationally. And they've already had successes. Terry says: "In one case we worked on, you had to pick up a partial zip file of a fairly new game from one server. Then you had to go to another server to get another one. It transpired that these all originated in the Netherlands, but all the servers were scattered over America, with two or three in the UK. Until we established all that with the ISDA and with some help from one or two of the servers, we couldn't be in a position to close the site down because it was only a partial thing. So we established that it was all within the same network and we were able to close down seven sites because of it."

As for the effect the Net is having on the UK market though, he's not too concerned. Yet. "The ISDA probably closes about 50-60 sites a week in America. Because of the difference in phone tariffs, anybody in the US can be on the Internet for weeks at a time, so it's easy to download games in their entirety overnight. In the UK, however, because of the high cost of phone calls at the moment, downloading programs is not an economical way of obtaining illegal software, so I don't go for closing sites *per se*. I tend to investigate the site and establish a case first, so that we can not only close the site but arrest the person who's operating it. In America, the strategy has to be to close down the sites because of the costs involved. Closing sites down makes it too frustrating for potential downloaders because it's estimated that if you have 20 links to a counterfeit piece of software in the States, only one of them will lead to the product because the other 19 are shut," says Terry.

But with the subject of flat-rate local calls currently being debated in the UK, is he worried that Brit pirates will simply head off onto the Internet and stay away from car boot sales and pubs? "It may be that I will have to alter our strategy but, again, the pirates still have to get their money. It's still the same theology of investigation with the Net because they need their money. In order to get money, they've got to tell us where to take it..."

WHAT... ER... IS ELSPA?

Read on for the definition, straight from the horse's mouth...

"The European Leisure Software Publishers' Association (ELSPA) represents the interests of the UK leisure software industry. Its members include almost all the major UK publishers and distributors of leisure software (computer games, reference, education and other interactive, multimedia CD-ROMS)."

So there. As well as the Crime Unit, ELSPA has also been responsible for coming up with a workable age rating system for games, an accreditation scheme to tackle piracy head on, software charts and more.

The screenshot shows the ELSPA website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like 'Anti Piracy', 'Accreditation', 'Codes of Practice', 'Research', 'Trade Shows', 'Membership', 'Press Releases', 'Contact Us', 'Downloads', 'FAQs', and 'Links'. The main content area is divided into several sections: 'Charts' (listing N64 games like WWF Wrestlemania 2000, Super Mario 64, Donkey Kong 64, Super Smash Brothers, and F-Zero X), 'New Releases' (listing GameBoy games like Pokemon Red, Pokemon Blue, Donkey Kong Land, Gameboy Gallery, and Tennis), and 'Headlines' (mentioning Scotland The Grave: The Leisure Software Industry Fights Back). There's also a section for 'Anti-Piracy Organisations' and a 'Join Forces' section. A login box for 'Member login' is visible at the top right. The footer mentions 'Check out ELSPA's website at www.elspa.com for more details.'

YOU AND WHOSE ARMY?

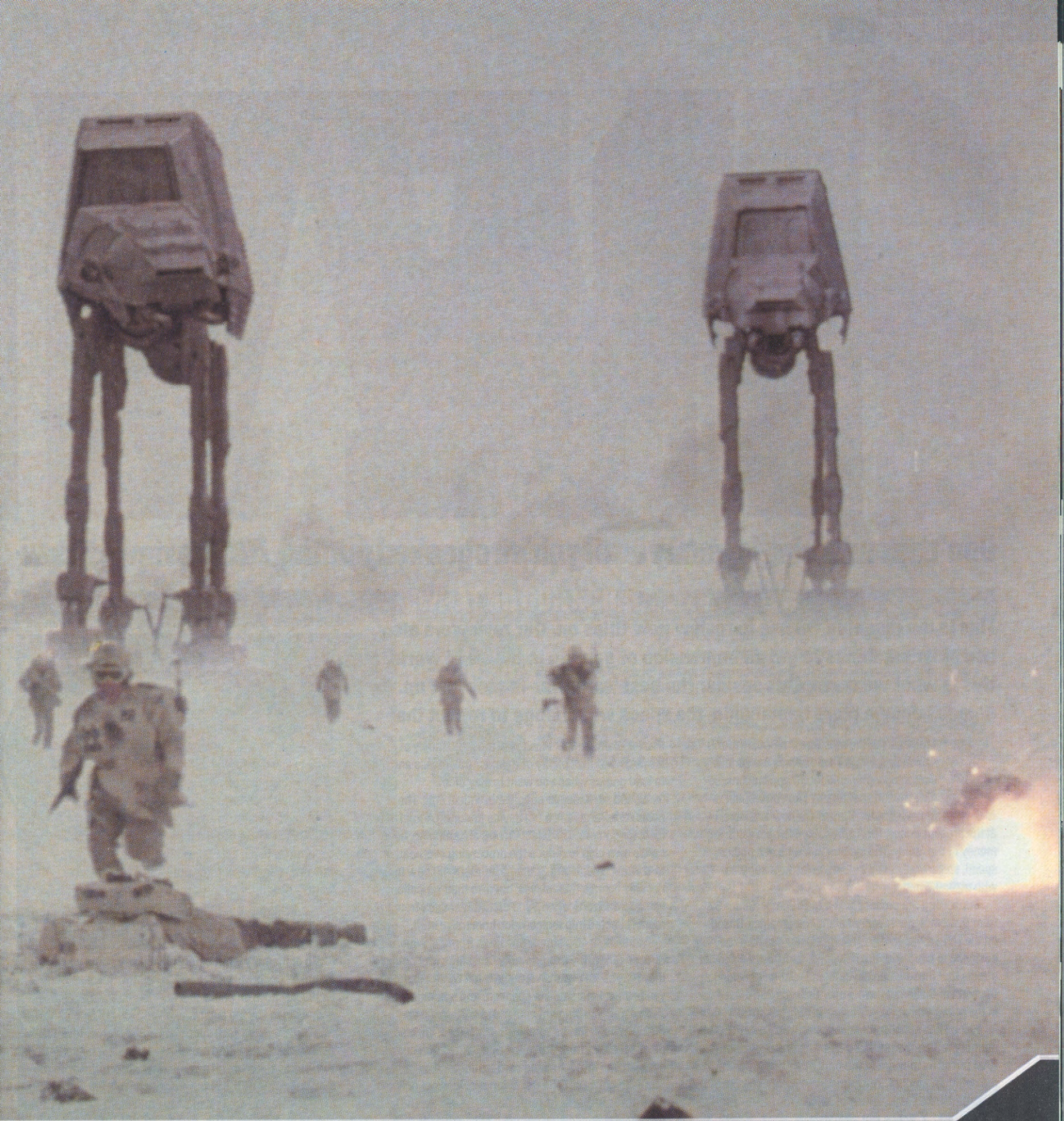


- Command both Imperial and Rebel troops through fierce ground based combat.
- Never before seen armies, units and structures designed specifically for Force Commander.
- All 3D battlefields are fully explorable - wage war from a safe distance or from up close and personal.
- 24 single and 35 multi-player campaigns.



**PC
CD
ROM**

Change the course of *Star Wars* history in this intense



STAR WARS FORCE COMMANDER™

focom.lucasarts.com

real-time strategy game...if you dare.

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PCZONE **REVIEWS**

Don't spend a single penny until you've checked out the **ZONE** reviews first –

THE PC ZONE GAMES SYSTEM

This is the machine we use to review new titles on. Our reviewers also use older machines to get an impression of gaming in the 'real' world, but this is what we currently consider the best 'value-for-money' set up. As games become more demanding, the specs will change to reflect that

At the heart of the machine is a 600MHz AMD Athlon processor. These babies are seriously scorching, optimised for 3D applications, so first-person shooters fly like you wouldn't believe. Faster Athlons are now available, but at the present prices, this is probably the best value for money of the family. The system bus runs at a godlike speed, so basically the whole thing is like a supercar with no brake pedal.

Supporting the processor is a MaxiGamer Xentor 32 from Guillemot, purveyors of all things graphicy. Based on the TNT2 chipset, these RAM-packed beasts are designed to cope with the polygons, textures and special effects that those game developers insist on chucking at the screen. Guillemot have a new GeForce 256-based card in the offing, which we're hoping to upgrade to soon.

Pionex has supplied the cases and 128Mb of PC100 memory for the motherboard. For gaming, especially with RAM prices as they are at the time of writing, 128Mb is the optimum amount. The cases have plenty of room for expansion without taking up excessive space. Nifty floppy slot as well...

Hard drive services are provided by the stunning 7,200rpm, 20Gb

Maxtor DiamondMax Plus (from the 5120 family of drives). It's large and fast: plenty of room for full installs and quick to load games when you want to play them.

Sound services are supplied by VideoLogic. The SonicVortex 2 card is a PCI device featuring Aureal A3D 2.0, ideal for gamers. The latest drivers are stunning, using the card's own chip to reduce the processing overhead on the CPU when calculating 3D audio. Aureal's API now handles not only sounds themselves, but also their reflections: as you approach a doorway, you can hear sounds from the room reflected into the corridor. Immersive stuff.

VideoLogic also supply speakers from the superb Sirocco range. We use primarily Crossfires for gaming – they may seem expensive, but you get twice the quality you pay for. Four satellite speakers and a humungous subwoofer give pinpoint accuracy for 3D audio and bass meaty enough for the rumbliest explosions. We also use other speakers from the range (the original Sirocco and new Sirocco Pro) for sound card testing.

Guillemot's DVD Theater setup provides not only the ability to load games quickly, but also to watch DVD movies (essential for reviewing games – not) with its bundled MPEG decoder card.

Peripherals are supplied by Microsoft, from USB mice (top-notch for first-person shooters) through the full force-feedback monty – joysticks and driving wheels – to the ubiquitous SideWinder gamepads.

Last but certainly not least are headphones from Philips (when the others in the office are suffering from Sirocco overkill) and fabulous 17inch Brilliance monitors (107Bs). If you're used to the cheaper monitors typically bundled with new PCs, the crispness and stability of the image displayed on these comes as quite a shock.



REVIEWS YOU CAN TRUST

We at **ZONE** pride ourselves on telling you exactly what we think. Our writers are the most experienced and talented reviewers in the business. They're all experts in their chosen genre, and they won't pull any punches – if a game's not worth buying, we'll tell you why. But we don't leave it there. We also want to know what you think of the games that come out, which is why we have our 'Feedback' section on page 104. This is where you get the opportunity to put your point of view into **PC ZONE**. If you've got a comment to make, then we want to hear it.



CHECK THE SPECS!

The standard spec machine these days is a P233 with 32Mb of memory – but before buying any game you need to make sure it will work on your system. Because the technical specs on packaging can sometimes be a little optimistic to say the least, make sure you check out the 'We Say' bit in our tech specs box at the start of reviews. This is where we report on what we think the minimum tech specs should be. If a game runs like a tortoise on the machine listed by the publishers, then we'll tell you. All the games reviewed are tested on the minimum-spec PC as quoted on the packaging.

WHERE TO CALL

Having trouble finding any of the games listed in the reviews section of the magazine? Here are the numbers you need to call

Accclaim 020 7344 5000 • Activision 01895 456700 • Anco 01322 292513 • Blue Byte 01604 232200 • Codemasters 01926 814132 • Cryo 01926 315550 • Eidos Interactive 020 8636 3000 • Electronic Arts 01753 549442 • Empire Interactive 020 8343 7337 • Europress 01625 855000 • Gremlin Interactive 0114 263 9900 • GT Interactive 020 8222 9700 • Hasbro Interactive 020 8569 1234 • Infogrames 0161 827 8000 • Interplay 020 7551 4222 • Microids (France) 00 33 146 01 54 01 • Microsoft 0345 002 000 • Mindscape 01444 246333 • NovaLogic 020 7405 1777 • Rage Software 0151 237 2200 • Take 2 Interactive 01753 854 444 • THQ 01483 767656 • Ubi Soft 020 8944 9300 • Zablab 01626 332233

REVIEWS

we'll tell you which games you've got to buy and which games to avoid

REVIEWS



68 THIEF II: THE METAL AGE



72 THEOCRACY



76 EURO LEAGUE FOOTBALL



80 SUPERBIKE 2000



84 ASHERON'S CALL

WHAT DO OUR SCORES MEAN?

PCZONE CLASSIC

90-100% Here at ZONE we score every game out of 100. If a game receives a score of 90 or above, it is awarded the PC ZONE 'Classic' award. These games are original, innovative, compelling and are worth buying even if you're not a fan of the genre.

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

80-89% Games that score 80-89 get the PC ZONE 'Recommended' award. Games in this category are excellent examples of their type and, if you're a fan of the genre, they're well worth buying.

70-79% Any games that score between 70-79 have just missed a 'Recommended' award, but don't ignore them. The score is well above average and that means you're getting a great title that's worth the investment if you're a fan of the genre.

50-69% Games that score in this region don't win any awards, but they're above average and well worth a look. If you're not a fan of the genre though, they will probably offer limited long-term appeal.

20-49% These games are below average and you should really only consider parting with your cash if you're a big fan of the series or genre, or you happen to see them at a reduced price.

PCZONE PANTS

0-19% Games that score under 20 should be avoided. They offer little in the way of long-term appeal, can be frustrating and definitely aren't much fun. If a game is seriously bugged, then it will also fall into this category. You have been warned.

PCZONE HALL OF FAME

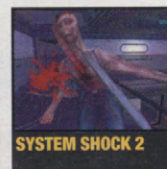
These are the games that currently score 90% or above and so are deemed to be PC ZONE classics



HALF-LIFE



AGE OF EMPIRES II



SYSTEM SHOCK 2



GRIM FANDANGO



COLIN MCRAE



FALCON 4



HIDDEN & DANGEROUS



CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 99/00



ULTIMA ONLINE



UNREAL TOURNAMENT

THIEF II: THE METAL AGE

★ £39.99 • Eidos • Out April

Dark in 'ere,
ain't it?

Paul Presley is certainly comfortable with the criminal underclasses. He should be, he's grassed enough of them up in his time

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 266MHz **Memory** 48Mb RAM **WE SAY** Naturally a high-end 3D card will help and should make it playable on anything above a PII 300MHz machine. At least 64Mb RAM, 128Mb if you can. And try to have a decent sound card, one with 3D audio as it makes a lot of difference in this game.

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

Few games can truly be said to innovate any more, but when Looking Glass gave the world *Thief: The Dark Project* back in 1998, a good many jaws dropped. Gone was the usual guns blazing. Instead, you had to sneak about not killing anyone. An alien concept to most. Still, the adventures of Garrett and the medieval atmosphere was generally praised by all. So inevitably, we've got a sequel.

The story is a sort of 'Robin Hood' affair, with the exception

that the noble thief gives to himself rather than to the poor. This time round, Garrett is under direct attack from the city's new Sheriff and it's not long before you discover he's more corrupt than you are. There's a power behind him, the Mechanists, who supply everyone with high-tech security devices. Unfortunately, one Mechanist in particular, Kerris, has his own

“The story is a sort of ‘Robin Hood’ affair, with the exception that the noble thief gives to himself rather than to the poor”

designs on the city involving large mechanical robots and plenty of bloodshed. Enter the mysterious Keepers and your female contact

Victoria, once again forcing you into their service as they attempt to find out what's going on and how to stop it.

We'd say it's the usual fantasy nonsense except that it's actually



above the typical orcs and sorcery claptrap.

SIZE IS EVERYTHING

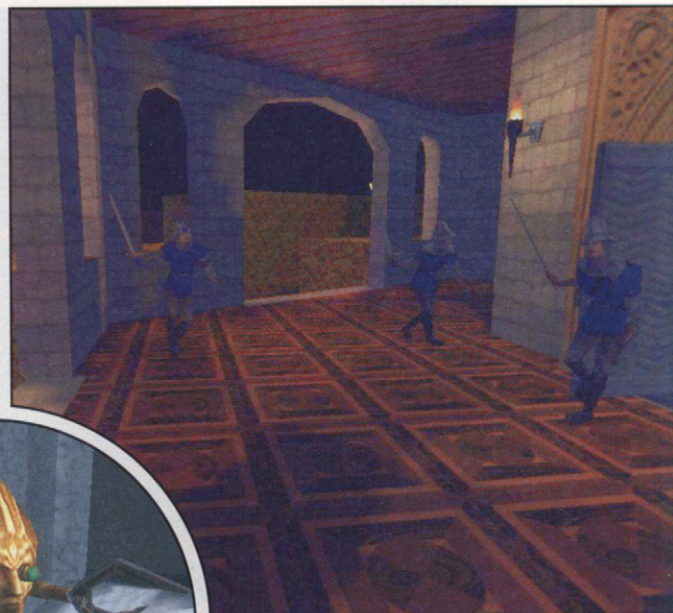
There's no doubt that *Thief II* is a much bigger game than before. The levels have been well designed and offer plenty of variety in the ways you can approach them. They still feel very self-contained, but at least they're big enough to last a good long while (even if they do feel a little easier than before, almost as

though difficulty has been replaced by dimensions). Thankfully, there's no sign of the zombie menace that plagued the original. There are the occasional nods in that direction (graveyards, morgues, etc), but that's all they are. Ghosts put in an appearance, but these are for the purposes of the story rather than as another foe to avoid. In fact, one of the more thoughtful levels, is where you're taking a trip through a pagan forest and as you stumble across one murdered corpse after another, their fates are depicted by ghostly after images.

The goals of each level are more intricate this time (although there's still plenty of booty to nick – you mustn't forget your roots after all). Framing police officials, escaping ambushes, blackmailing, and so on. They still play a bit too much along the linear 'get from



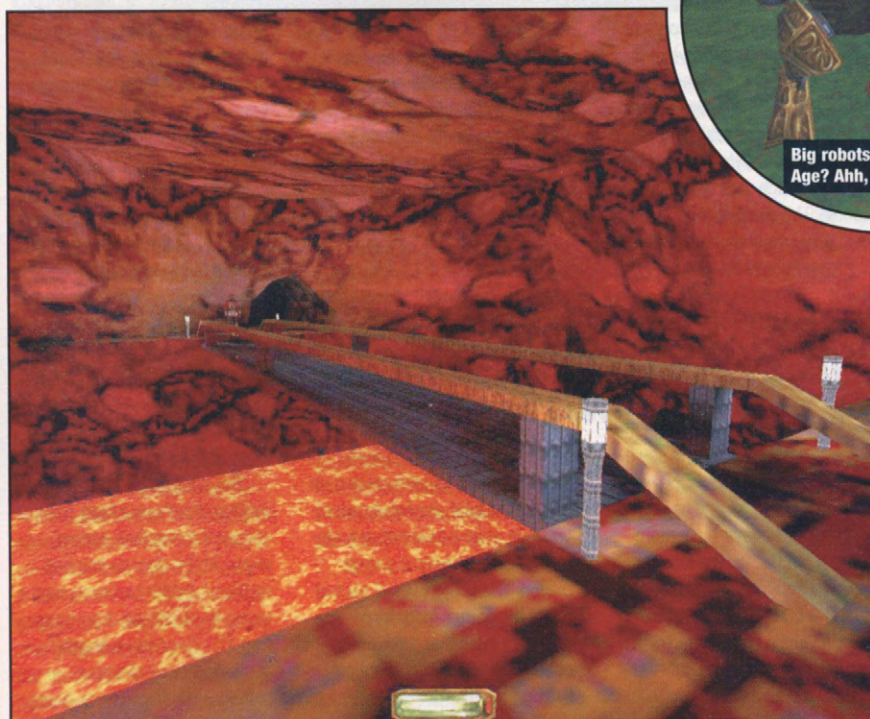
If you're going to fight, it's safest to do it from a distance.



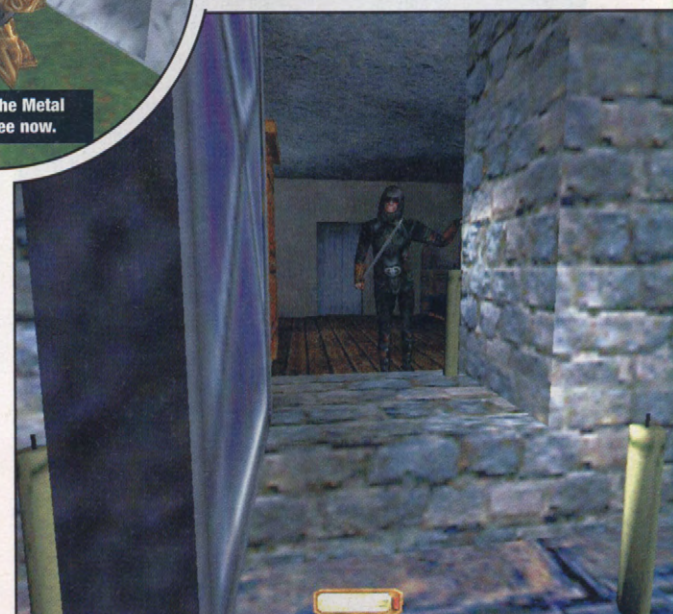
That's torn it.



Big robots? The Metal Age? Ahh, I see now.

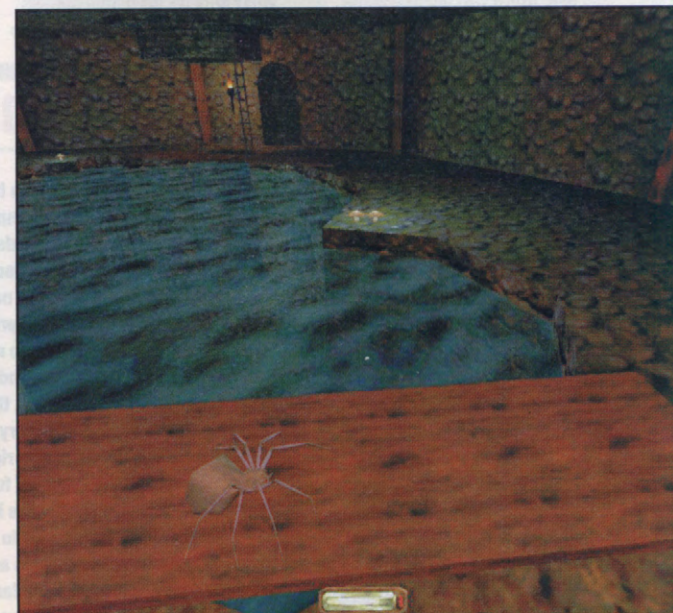


Thief II is built around an enhanced version of the Dark Engine.

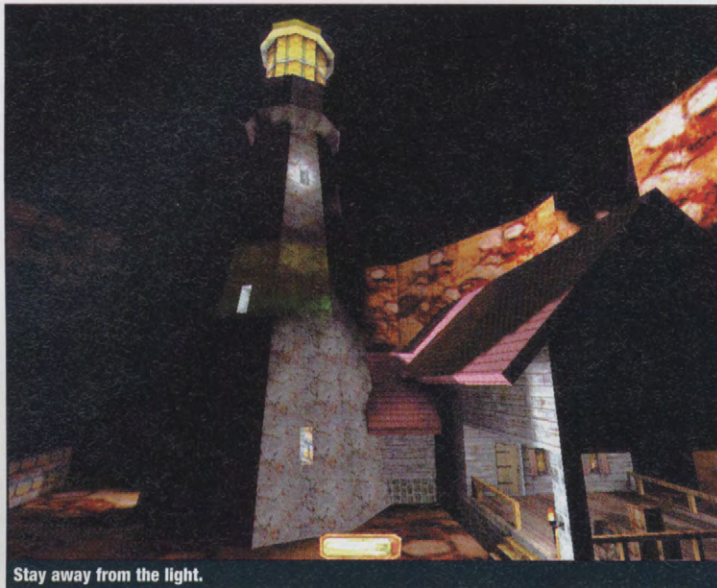


Could you direct me to the bathroom? I've just cacked myself.

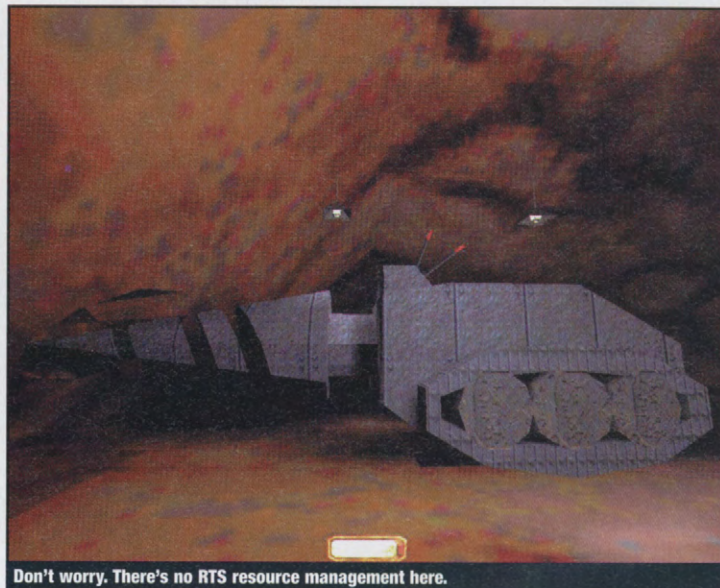
Sleeping on the job.



These are the sort of creatures a thief has to put up with.



Stay away from the light.



Don't worry. There's no RTS resource management here.

← point A to point B then go to point C' line, but at least they're challenging enough to make you work hard to reach them.

BEFOGGING YOUR MIND

Thief always had an odd look about it. Almost as though the whole game was being viewed through a very slight fisheye lens. It was always a little too 'angular' as well. A bit too straight-edged. The Dark Engine has undergone some improvements here and there, but this is still a problem.

In its favour though, it now has much nicer atmospheric effects. The clouds in the sky are very nice (taken directly from the *Flight Unlimited* technology we understand) and the various weather effects, such as rain and fog, look great.

The biggest thing about *Thief* though, is light, or rather the lack of it. True a vast amount of the game is spent in murky darkness,

which makes the lighting (and the flaws therein) so much more noticeable when it's there. A good example of what we're talking about is when you're in a fairly well-lit room, you open a door into a dark corridor and there's no light spilling out. Whether this is a limitation of the Dark Engine or a deliberate design policy we can't say. What we can say is that it tends to give each environment a sort of 'false' quality, and it does tend to show up the Dark Engine's limitations. Especially in the recent, er, light of games such as *Unreal Tournament* and *Quake III*.

HE'S BEHIND YOU

The sound aspect still works a treat in this game. The *Thief* series remains one of the few that fully explores the use of sound as an active part of the gameplay and we're pleased to say that *Thief II* continues the tradition admirably. We're sure it's deliberate but every noise you make seems to be

amplified by ten and simply opening a creaky door while you're trying to stay unnoticed is enough to put the willies up you.

The guards are still comical – except when they're trying to put a sword through your neck, of course. The amount of speech has been upped significantly, so there's less repetition in their mumblings. Sometimes you just want to sit in a corner for ten minutes or so and

makes you sit on the edge of your seat as a guard walks inches in front of you, and still makes you breathe a sigh of relief when he passes on without spotting you. It knows its stuff from the first game and it hasn't lost any of its nervy appeal.

GARRETT, MEET LARA

However, the truth is, despite all the nice touches and solid

So far Core has offered us four games that, aside from slight graphical enhancements, have been pretty much the same. We were yelling from every rooftop following the second title that we needed to see something new, and each time we were ignored. Only now, at the fourth attempt, has the public backlash really begun and Core and Eidos know that they won't be able to pull off

“Thief always had an odd look about it, almost as though the whole game was being viewed through a very slight fisheye lens”

listen to what they have to say about food standards, how their lot isn't a happy lot and how the Mechanists always have more reliable torches (a nice touch that last one, and an indication of how adaptive some of the AI routines are since he'd commented on a torch that was burning until we doused it with a water arrow).

Thief II still has enough atmosphere to immerse you, still

atmosphere, *Thief II* still feels more like an expansion pack than a full-on sequel, especially when you look at how little has actually changed. It's true that giving players what they want is no bad thing, the games industry moves at such a pace that the games need to be constantly re-inventing themselves in order to stay ahead.

The obvious example of this trend is the *Tomb Raider* series.

more of the same for a fifth title.

The same is true here. The original *Thief* was a bold, fresh entrant into the first-person arena. At the time no one had explored stealth tactics in such a game. It was all run-frag-jump-frag-kill. *Thief* was a breath of fresh, sneaky air into a testosterone-filled genre. Since then we've had 'stealth' games galore. Granted, most of them

IN PERSPECTIVE

Thief introduced the stealth aspect into the world of first-person shooters. Since then, we've seen various special forces sims make use of 'sneaking' tactics, each adding their own touches along the way. *Thief II* doesn't take the concept any further, it just repeats it. Meanwhile, *System Shock 2* still contains the best use of the Dark Engine to date.

System Shock 2

SWAT 3: Rogue Spear

Thief: The Dark Project

Thief II: The Metal Age

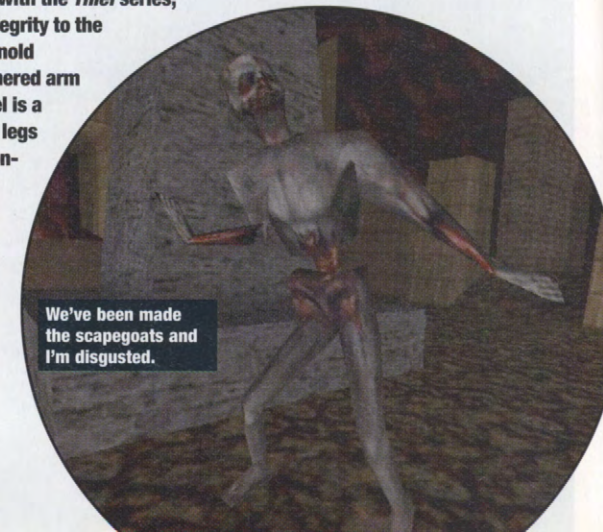
DISGRUNTLED UNDEAD DOWN TOOLS

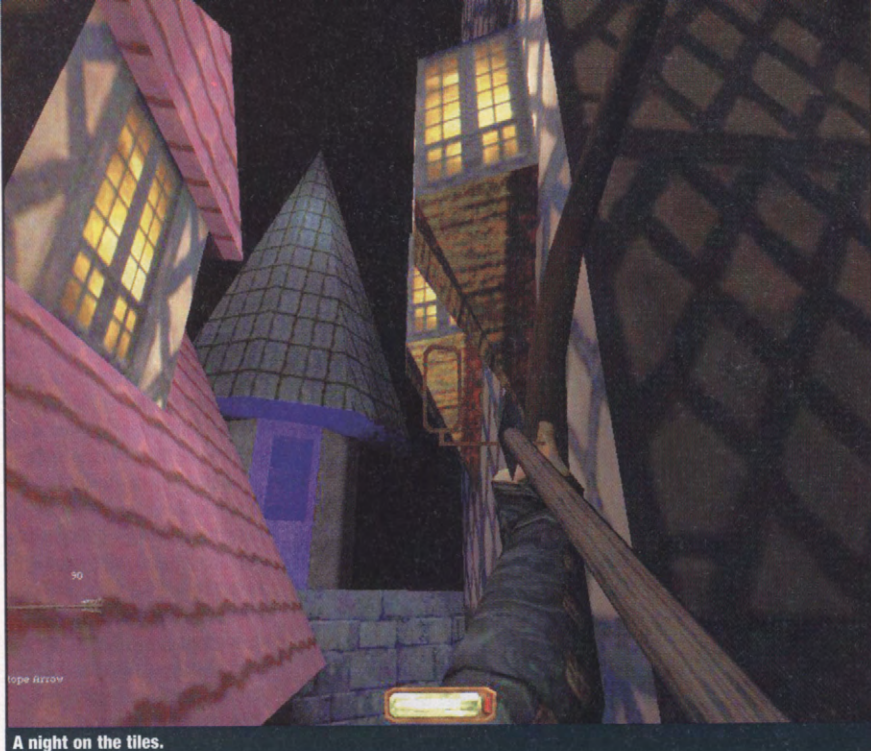
The violent games industry was hit yesterday by the shock announcement from the National Union of Undead Protagonists and its regulatory body, OFROT, of an immediate strike following the exclusion of zombie-related horror in the PC sequel *Thief II*.

“Our members have been unfairly singled out as the sole problem with the *Thief* series, when it was quite clear we added much-needed variety and moral integrity to the game's overwhelming criminal nature,” said NUUP chief executive, Arnold Knowles, in a statement to the press. Pausing only to retrieve his withered arm from the floor, he continued: “To remove our presence from this sequel is a direct slur on our members' good name and those of us with working legs won't stand for it. Furthermore, the inclusion of non-corporeal and non-Union ghosts is an insult to every hard-working member of the living dead. They're taking the brains right out of our mouths.”

Knowles immediately called for a cessation of all moaning, shambling and being shot in the head activities and declared that necessary decomposition was to be kept to an absolute minimum.

The long-term effects of this action are yet to be determined with Looking Glass Technologies so far declining to comment on the action. Concerned representatives from CapCom, however, are believed to be flying in to act as mediators in the negotiations.





A night on the tiles.



Come Dancing with Angela Rippon.

have been on the side of goodness. *Rainbow Six*, *Rogue Spear*, *SWAT 3*, *Hidden & Dangerous*, and so on. But as each one has come along it has taken hold of the softly, softly aspect, worked with it and tweaked it about. For instance, *Rainbow Six* allowed you to plan out tactics in advance, *H&D* gave you third-person perspectives. Everyone has built upon *Thief*'s initial skeleton.

So for *Thief II* to just ignore the competition, to pretend that the intervening year and a bit hasn't happened is, well, criminal (ho ho). But that's what Looking Glass appears to have done, as *Thief II* constantly feels identical to its predecessor. Not to say it isn't a good game – it is. The first game was great and this is just as good. But that's all it is. What it no longer has is the freshness and the originality that the first title showed. Hence you come away thinking it's somehow lacking.

WHAT'S AN HONEST THIEF TO DO?

So what's the lesson here for Looking Glass? (They listened to

us about the zombies after all, so there's no reason to think they're not paying attention now.) Quite simply this: don't fall into the *Tomb Raider* trap. If you are going to give us a *Thief III*, then it needs to be much more than just bigger levels with the same engine.

First of all, take a look at just how good games like *Unreal Tournament* and *Quake III* look. Aesthetically, the Dark Engine has gone about as far as it can. The fact that so much of *Thief II* is spent in shadows and perpetual twilight has helped to disguise the wrinkles to some extent, but you can only push it so far.

What's even more important though, is the nature of the gameplay. Sequels need to constantly reinvent, not just repeat. Make the city in which Garrett works feel like a real city. Make it live and breathe, à la *The Nomad Soul*. In fact, while playing Quantic Dreams' under-appreciated epic we kept thinking how great it would be to have first-person titles like *Thief* make use of this kind of world. Or why not have the levels merge

seamlessly like *Half-Life*? You managed it with *System Shock 2* after all.

Anyway, this is turning into a rant against mistakes of the future, rather than a review of the present. Nevertheless, following *Thief* with *System Shock 2* has led us to believe that *Thief II* would give us more than it did. What it has given us is a game that's still very good, still very atmospheric and still very playable, but one's that is not setting our world on fire as much as the first one did. A more clear-cut case of sequel-itis there has never been. [CZ]

PCZVERDICT

↑ **UPPERS** Still very atmospheric • Huge levels • Good storyline • No zombies

↓ **DOWNERS** The Dark Engine is showing its age • Not much 'true' gameplay innovation

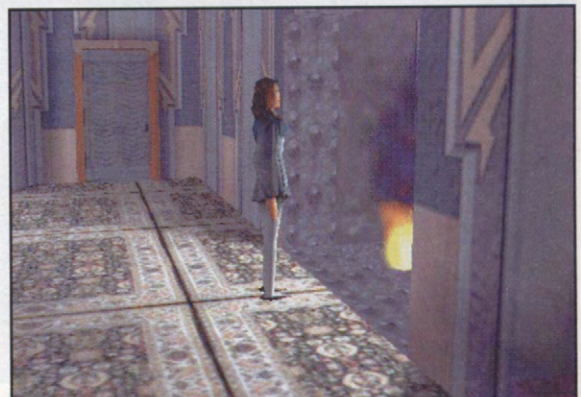
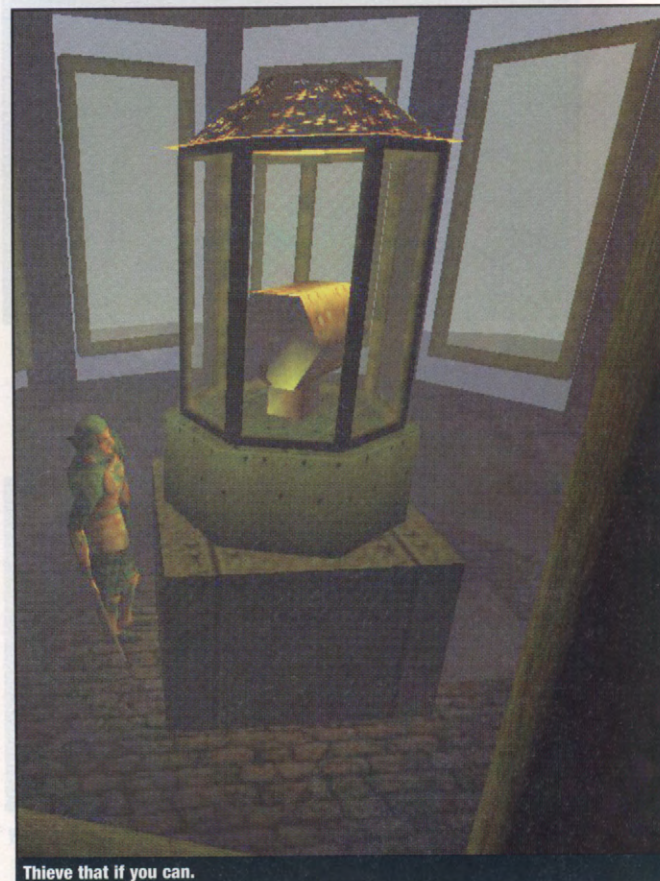
82 Still very good, but fast in danger of becoming tired

THE SIX MILLION GROAT MAN

One of our favourite childhood toys was a rather natty Steve Austin action figure (that's Steve Austin *The Six Million Dollar Man* incidentally, not 'Stone Cold' Steve Austin the American wrestler and gay icon). The best thing about it was the 'bionic eye' feature, a small telescope affair in the back of his head that allowed you to spy on your friends and made you look as though you had your nose stuck up the doll's arse (which makes the previous name clarification doubly important).

We only mention it because one of the new features of *Thief II* is Garrett's own 'bionic' eye and its zoom function, which is all it does incidentally. Some of you may have been reading various reports about heat and night vision functions. Sadly, these appear to have been the ramblings of a diseased mind as there's no sign of them in the game.

Oh, it does have one other function, it can be linked to a handy remote camera device that Garrett can chuck around corners and over walls. Of course, it would have been more comedic if Garrett actually had to take out his eye and hold it around walls and the like. But then, no one ever asks us...

This is as close to romance as *Thief II* gets.

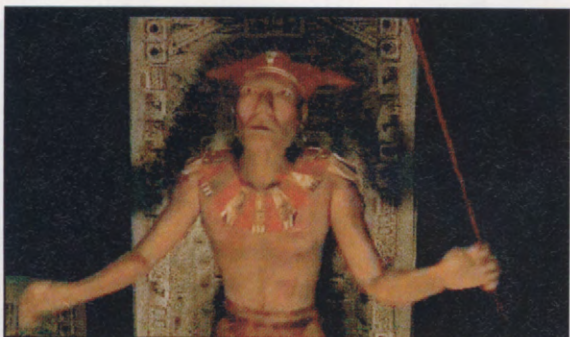
Thieve that if you can.

THE PROPHECY

The main campaign of the game *Prophecy* centres around a, errrrm, prophecy, unsurprisingly



1 You are the heir to the throne of the Atlan Empire, which of late has suffered many tragedies. After coming to power, you must revive your people's fortunes.



2 The priests of your tribe, superstitious bunch that they are, believe the exiled god Feathered Snake is about to return to earth. The head priest holds a ritual to determine when this may be.



3 Falling into a trance, he has a vision of the Spanish armada arriving instead. This premonition spells the impending doom of the whole Aztec empire. The leaders of the tribes must be alerted so they can prepare themselves for the arrival of the dangerous colonisers.



4 Wouldn't you know it. Old head priestly gets killed by a bolt of lightning mid trance and doesn't have a chance to warn anyone. What a selfish man.

THEOCRACY

★ £34.99 • Ubi Soft • Out Now

It was prophesised that a man would unite the Aztec tribes and save them from the Spanish invaders, but with his usual sense of bad timing, *Martin Korda* turned up 500 years late

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** X10 Speed CD-ROM drive **WE SAY** PIII300, 64Mb RAM

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

Hype, don't you just hate it. The anticipation, the counting down the days, oh the apparent excitement of it all.

Who remembers waiting for *Independence Day*, possibly the most built up film of all time, or the third Oasis album *Be Here Now*? The hype which surrounded both was huge and yet, how many of us can say we were truly satisfied by them? Come on, be honest now. Sometimes in life, however, something really great comes along, without bravado, huge advertising campaigns and a host of false promises. It doesn't happen very often, but when it does, it's as refreshing as a pint of lager after a chicken vindaloo, and definitely worth shouting about.

WHO, WHAT, WHEN?

A mix of *Civilization II* and *Age Of Empires II*, *Theocracy* attempts to take the best from both games, and for the most part it succeeds.

Set in Mexico during the 15th and 16th centuries, you are cast as the leader of one of 42 Aztec tribes, with your goal being to unite all of them and fight off the Spanish invaders. The beauty of *Theocracy* is that it is open ended and not mission-based. You are presented with a map and a realm, and the rest is up to you.

Also, it's real-time turn-based, which stops you from drowning in complexity when your empire starts to expand. Make your choices, direct your troops and accelerate time. If you want to jump in at any time, stop the clock and issue your orders. Simple, yet effective. Combat, however, is all done in real-time, but if you don't

fancy it much, the computer can emulate a result for you. The story line unfolds as you progress, with both cut-scenes and text used to wonderful effect throughout, and a multitude of sub-quests creating plenty of variation to keep your interest. There really is something here for everyone.

SLAVE TO THE GAME

Day one. You've got a patch of land, a few buildings, some soldiers and a group of slaves. Everyone born into your society starts life as a slave, but can be trained to be a soldier, farmer, builder, etc in corresponding

“Many a time I found myself crying out in despondency as my star warrior was mercilessly cut down in combat. Sad, I know”

schools. Farms, ranches and fishing huts must be constructed in order to feed everyone, and barracks to train your army. Every single character then gets to work and watching them go about their duties is fun in itself. With excellent graphics and atmospheric music, *Theocracy* makes an excellent first impression.

If you don't want to allocate every slave to every job, you can appoint a governor, set how many slaves you want for each task, eg food production, and let him take care of the rest. This is very helpful if you're the kind of person who gets scared off by over complicated resource management, but it still allows hardened strategists the chance

to take care of every element of their tribe's daily life. Another rather nice feature is that each citizen has their own personal attributes. Every warrior for example, has his own hit points, experience, attack, defence and stamina levels, giving them an engaging individuality. Many a time I found myself crying out in despondency as my star warrior was mercilessly cut down in combat. Sad, I know, but *Theocracy* has a way of doing that to you.

A VIEW TO A KILL

There are four different perspectives in which the game-world can be viewed; Normal, Bird's Eye, Strategic and Realm. The first shows you close ups of your men and buildings, while the Bird's Eye view gives you a Scrolling map of your province. The Strategic view shows your entire province from above and the Realm view shows all the tribes in the Aztec empire. The interface is easy to use and access, and is further aided by an excellent (if occasionally rushed) tutorial and help option, which explains anything you might have difficulty with. The only time you may have trouble handling the different viewpoints is during combat. It would have been better if the Bird's Eye map had been put on the side bar during battles, because as it is, you end up frantically fumbling to change between the Normal and Bird's Eye screens.

Realm mode gives you control over trading routes, diplomacy and army movement. Some provinces will have resources that others don't, so transporting these from one part of your empire to another becomes an integral part of success. On the diplomatic front, alliances can be made (or bribed) and wars declared. Finally, your troops can be moved to a neighbouring province, where the only option is, of course, to attack.

Combat in *Theocracy* is very good if not outstanding. In the latter stages of the game, you can literally have thousands of units on screen at a time, bringing a sense of magnitude and realism to the battles so often missing from RTS games. Appointing commanders allows you to group

your men in one of four set formations but, better still, you can create your own with the easy to use formations editor. Heroes, mages and jaguars (the cats not the cars) can all fight alongside the three basic army units of spearmen, swordsmen and archers.

Several technologies can also be discovered by conquering certain realms. Being strategically aware gives you a distinct advantage over larger but less organised armies. There are two main criticisms of the combat, though: there aren't enough units to choose from, and your men can occasionally be a little unresponsive to your commands. In this respect, *Age Of Empires II* is far superior.

THEY THINK IT'S ALL OVER, BUT IT'S NOT

Theocracy has avoided difficulty settings. Instead, the further through the game you go, the harder it becomes, especially when the Spanish turn up. Just when you think you've got the game wrapped up, along come the boys from southern Europe to try and colonise you. This is the hardest part of the game, but it's the part I liked most. There's always a new challenge, always something new to discover and subsequently, always the desire to get that little bit further. With multiplayer available over LAN and the Internet, the overall longevity is huge.

Theocracy is a fantastic game, devoid of hype, but full of atmosphere and gameplay. It falls short of *AOEII*'s honed combat elements, and perhaps lacks *Civ II*'s replayability, but anyone who's enjoyed these two should go out and buy it. Like a love bite, it's unexpected, sucks you in and leaves a lasting impression. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS** Open ended gameplay • Excellent mix of strategy and combat • Huge battles • Accessible to newbies and hardcore strategists alike
- DOWNERS** Not enough army units • Combat interface initially tricky • Soldiers occasionally unresponsive to commands

84 A great blend of RTS combat and resource management



Control diplomacy, trade routes and troop movements via the Realm viewpoint.



The chap in the middle sure knows how to make friends. Not.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Age Of Empires II is still king of the hill as far as RTS war sims go, with *Civ II* possessing the greatest depth of gameplay. However, if you want a mixture of both, then you can't go too far wrong with *Theocracy*. Similar titles include the still entertaining but ageing *Populous: The Beginning* and *Seven Kingdoms II*, which looks nice, but doesn't offer the same fun or playability as the others.

Theocracy

Age Of Empires II

Civilization II: The Test Of Time

Populous: The Beginning

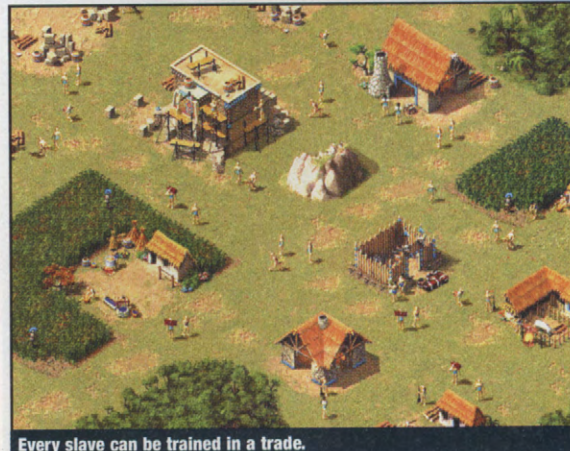
Seven Kingdoms II



Train warriors in the barracks.



Magic plays a major part in the battles.



Every slave can be trained in a trade.



The Bird's Eye view has nothing to do with cod, bread crumbs or bearded old men.



You must collect resources to be able to construct new buildings.



Getting to grips with bike control can be an uphill struggle.



Motocross racing from the comfort of your own home.



The start of the race is definitely the most exciting part of the game.



You can race against 20 riders at a time.

SILKOLENE HONDA MOTOCROSS GP

★ £29.99 • Midas • Out Now

In an attempt to banish his terrible memory of falling off a tricycle as a child, **Martin Korda** played *Motocross GP* – it didn't work

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 16Mb **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D Accelerator **WE SAY** PII300, 32Mb RAM

For many people, the idea of trying motocross racing inspires images of riding flimsy two wheeled vehicles over rough terrain, getting covered in crap and sustaining cramps from clutching onto the bike as if their lives depended on it – which it does, of course.

If you're anything like us though, motocross is something you admire from afar, secretly wanting to have a go but too scared to try. That's not something we'd ever openly admit. So we just go on with the, 'It's too expensive' lie and be done with it.

Just when you think it's spare underpants at the ready time, eg time to race, you're faced with even more bike settings. This is scary in itself, with gear box, tyre tread, brakes and suspension, all configurable. Fortunately the manual does its job well and explains what's what in plain English. This is also the case with the advanced settings, where most of the above can be tinkered with in much more complex ways.

After encountering this mass of adjustability, you'd be forgiven for being totally put off. The feeling isn't helped when you start racing. Because there are no actual

“You're left for dead from the start by your opponents, spending the majority of early races either on your own or on your arse”

Thanks to The Dawn Interactive, this doesn't have to be the case. All wannabe bikers, too poor to afford the real thing, can now experience motocross thrills from the comfort of their homes.

TWEAK THAT BIKE

SHMGP is primarily aimed at simulation fans, claiming realism as its most compelling feature. True to its word, there are a load of options on offer to tweak the race criteria. If you know you're going to trash your bike faster than a lunatic with a baseball bat, then it's probably best you keep the damage option switched off. Likewise, automatic gears to start with are an absolute must and out of three engine sizes, 125cc, 250cc and 500cc, 125cc is the most sensible for newcomers.

Menus are all nicely laid out and easy to use, offering three ways to race: single race, quick race and championship. The single race option allows customisation of conditions and is a good way to practice and, believe me, you're going to need all the practice you can get.

difficulty settings, you're left for dead from the start by your superior opponents, spending the majority of early races either on your own or on your arse.

OVER WE GO

Falling off a bike has never been so easy. The start of each race is often the most entertaining, with riders crashing into each other and causing massive pile ups. Unfortunately, said spectacle is often watched from afar, because getting to grips with the highly sensitive controls, will have you swerving in every direction bar the one you want to go in.

As cynicism sets in, you start to notice the faults. These include other bikes being able to pass through your own and, most annoying of all, falling off whenever you cross the 5inch plastic barrier marking the track boundaries. That's not what we'd call realistic. Annoying perhaps, realistic, never. There's not even a split-screen option that would let you introduce an opponent on your level, but Internet and LAN play are available.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Motocross Madness is still the motocross game, but *Superbike 2000* (see page 80) is the pick of the rest.

Motocross Madness

Superbike 2000

Castrol Honda Superbike 2000

Silkolene Honda Motocross GP

If there's one word of advice we can give at this point, it's 'persevere', as there are some really nice elements to *SHMGP*. The scenery whizzes by, creating an excellent sense of speed and, once you've come to grips with the controls, the whole race can be almost as much fun as the adrenaline-filled starts. There are also many nice touches, mud

flying up from tyres, handling degenerating as the bike gets damaged and yellow flags warning you of crashes ahead.

Difficulty settings aside, lack of detail is not a criticism that can be levelled at any part of the game and, if you're patient, *SHMGP* can be rewarding. But it falls down with its inaccessibility, lack of difficulty options and, most of all, on just how easy it is to fall off. Fun if you love motocross and bikes, but hard to recommend to anyone else. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Great attention to detail • Frenetic action • Excellent sense of speed • LAN and Internet play • Loads of options

DOWNERS Initially Inaccessible • Too easy to fall off • Some annoying graphical glitches • No split-screen play • No real difficulty settings

66 Fast-paced biking action, but only if you're patient



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BY GEOFF CRAMMOND

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EURO LEAGUE FOOTBALL

★ £29.99 • Dinamic Multimedia • Out April

Steve Hill in football game review shock

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P266 Memory 32Mb **SUPPORTS** All major graphics cards **WE SAY** Up the RAM to 64Mb and you'll be fine

The PC arena currently houses more football games than any man could reasonably be expected to play outside of the confines of a prison cell. Unless, of course, that man was being paid to do so, and even then it's a largely thankless task, prone to causing occasional fits of pique amid moments of mute despair.

There are, however, a few football games that can happily be played for free. One such game is *Championship Manager*, and another, if you can find the time, is *FIFA 2000*. If you want to spend hours of your life considering the relative merits of left-sided attacking midfielders, you opt for *CM*. If you want a hi-tech kick-about, *FIFA*'s the one. Horses for courses, if you like. And if you want both, you buy both. Unless you're poor.

Suppose, however, you had a hankering for management, but also enjoyed getting your thumbs dirty on the pitch. Five years ago, you'd buy *Sensible World Of Soccer* and you'd be as happy as a pig in shit. Now it's almost as much a part of pretend football's

the ubiquitous millennial version. It wasn't to be though, with the engulfing by Infogrames of erstwhile publishers Gremlin finally stopping the rot.

Unperturbed, developers Dinamic Multimedia are carrying on regardless and have opted to publish the game themselves. Who can blame them? The series has sold about a million copies already (albeit mainly in Spain) and the public are nothing if not gullible.

So is it the same game? Yes and no. Yes, in that the somewhat overcomplicated and unsatisfying management aspects are still in place, along with the traditionally irksome interface. No, in that for the first time players are actually able to take charge of the on-pitch action. Let's stress now that this is merely an option and if desired the game can be played purely as a management simulation.

BATTLE BEAST

The match action is being hawked as one of the game's major selling points and for this reason it has to be investigated thoroughly.

“The players are bereft of pace, have the turning circle of a battleship and employ a passing system that is at best haphazard and at worst unworkable”

history as *Subbuteo* is, and, to be honest, you'd struggle to find a slow enough to run it. There's clearly a gap in the market for a game that combines arcade action with in-depth management, and *Euro League Football* claims to be that game.

NAME GAME

While it may not change the world, *Euro League Football* has at least changed its name. In years gone by, this game has been released as *Premier Manager 97*, *Premier Manager 98* and *Premier Manager 99* and in an alternate universe would almost certainly have managed

So is it as good as *FIFA 2000*? No it isn't. In fact it's not even as good as *FIFA 96*. A stunted affair, *ELF*'s players are bereft of pace, have the turning circle of a battleship and employ a passing system that is at best haphazard and at worst unworkable. Shooting is also a hit and miss affair – no pun intended – and the best plan often seems to be getting the ball to your most skillful player and dribbling it into the net, aided by the mildly impressive shimmy function.

Having an interactive option also makes for something of a dilemma. Having spent months building up your squad and



As the Red Scum supporters would sing say: “Yip-Jaap Stam, beat him if you can...”



The player in blue bears a striking resemblance to Dinamic employee Sie Barlow, as featured in PCZ #85.

developing an innovative, tactical style, it seems a bit pointless to throw it all away on the press of a pad, or indeed to give yourself an unfair advantage.

Of course, the idea is that the off-the-field machinations are reflected in the gameplay, but the arcade model simply isn't strong enough to support this theory. The interactive element is available as a stand-alone option and you can simply have a kick-about either against the computer or another

undiscerning gamer. However, if you own almost any of the major football games released in the last few years, it's hard to see why you would want to. It's just about playable, but in this day and age that really isn't enough.

3D MAGIC

Don't buy this game on the strength of its arcade option then. But if you're looking for a management game, you could do worse. As usual, the action is relayed either



“Look at me, I've got a ball on my foot.”

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THE TIME FOR WAR GAMES IS OVER, HERE
COMES THE REAL THING

by LARRY STURGIS War Correspondent

Until now pilots training for combat have relied on a super realistic flight simulation, known as Enemy Engaged. This has; two fully simulated, fully armed combat helicopters - US RAH-66 Comanche and Russian Ka-52 Hokum-B. **Cockpits** - Highly detailed virtual cockpits - views include your co-pilot/gunner, Fly as pilot or gunner. Fully animated crew.

Flight Dynamics - Authentic flight dynamics accurately recreate the individual handling aspects of each helicopter. Configuration options available

Systems - Precision avionics and displays, Novice and realistic avionics options, System damage, Authentic weapon Hokum ejector seats!

Real Combat Areas - Lebanon - The US step in to stop production of weapons of mass destruction, Taiwan - Chinese invasion, Yemen - a border war with Saudi Arabia

Real Terrain - Modelled on real digital maps with hills, trees and buildings to hide behind, Vast combat zones. Tactical installations (airfields, military bases, etc.), Strategic installations (power stations, oil refineries, etc.)

Colonel Burkowitz on the problems facing Taiwan pages 4 and 5

3D Models - 60 + highly detailed and articulated 3D models, both ground, sea and air vehicles.

Missions - Realistic missions, Fly with wingmen and co-ordinate attacks, Radio in air and artillery support, Day, night and all weather missions.

Campaigns - 3 large scale dynamic campaigns, Smaller scale 'skirmish' games, Detailed campaign interface, Three game difficulty levels. Plus those of Apache Havoc if it's installed.

FIRST PICTURES



3D Engine - Specifically designed for low level helicopter combat, Supports 640x480 to 1600x1200 screen resolutions, Supports hardware transform and lighting (T&L).

Multiplayer - Internet, LAN, Serial, Modem.

Compatibility With 'Enemy Engaged: Apache Havoc - If Apache Havoc is installed then you can fly the Apache and Havoc gunships and play the Apache Havoc campaigns.



GRAND PRIX WORLD

★ £29.99 • Hasbro • Out now

To get the full Grand Prix experience, **Paul Presley** grew strange pointy sideburns and slept with leggy blondes. In his dreams

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 64Mb RAM **WE SAY** It's none too taxing technically. At least 64Mb RAM and a PII should do you

Formula One is an odd sport. Granted, next to spending all night playing *Planescape: Tournament*, it's the best reason for staying up until 5am on a Sunday. But let's not kid ourselves into thinking that we're watching it for any reason other than the hope of witnessing a massive *Carnageddon*-style pile-up.

“You’ve got no real way of knowing what’s going wrong with your cars other than watching the bits fall off”

Anyhow, *Grand Prix World* concerns itself with managing an F1 team rather than driving for one, putting it in a field of exactly, er, one game. Sure, most of the driving sims allow you to tinker with the set-up of your car, but how many let you decide which catering firm to use at each race?

I WISH I COULD DRIVE

The first thing that hits you is how weird the music is. It sounds like Phillip Glass having a mystical love child with Jean Michel Jarre (during Jarre's early

'80s period). While it wouldn't have been out of place in some *Homeworld*-style space exploration epic, it has as much to do with F1 as the 'music' of Keith Harris has with Oasis.

On the licensing side of things, it's odd we have to start with the 1998 season, as people like sports sims to be up-to-date. On the

(one of my personal favourites) is still stuck with Ford with no sign of Jaguar in the game.

LOSING TRACK

Another problem is the lack of CM3-style accessibility or cross-referencing that's vital in games of this nature. You get an email from your design team telling you they've completed work on the new automatic braking system, let's say. But rather than giving you an instant link to the necessary data, you have to click on the engineering section, open

everything in the game, from tyre wear to the staff levels of your official fan club. There can be something like 50 emails coming in each month and it's far too easy to lose track of where you are and what needs to be done.

Race days are oddly presented too. There are plenty of ways to view the race (the pseudo-3D TV views are strange at first, although you do get used to them) but there's a surprising lack of telemetry data for you to analyse. Consequently you've no real way of knowing what's going on with your cars other than watching the bits fall off.

The radio feedback is pointless, since it's next to impossible to tell which driver is speaking, and finding anything out requires far too much fiddling about. In the end you just sort of sit back and cross your fingers during race days (unless you're Eddie Jordan in which case you re-shape your sideburns).

THAT SAID

Despite its problems, you do find yourself warming to *GPW* after a while. Most of the faults are more to do with the cumbersome nature of the presentation than actual flaws with the programming and if you can live with them, then there's a fairly nice game underneath.

IN PERSPECTIVE

It's not as though *Grand Prix World* has any competition. However, it's better than its previous incarnation (*Grand Prix Manager 2*), although a few features have been lost along the way. Despite being a different sport, *Championship Manager 3* shows the world how management games should really work.

Grand Prix World

Championship Manager 3

Grand Prix Manager 2

I say fairly nice as a lot of the time it does feel as though you're just going through the motions rather than actually making strategic decisions about your team. But I guess it's safe to say that in a field of one, *GPW* reigns supreme (and guess which part of that sentence will be used in the adverts). **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

- ⬆ **UPPERS** Challenging • Becomes sort of fun after a while
- ⬇ **DOWNERS** Lack of CM3-style cross-referencing • Clumsy, off-putting interface, especially during races • You have to micro-manage everything • Completely out-of-place music

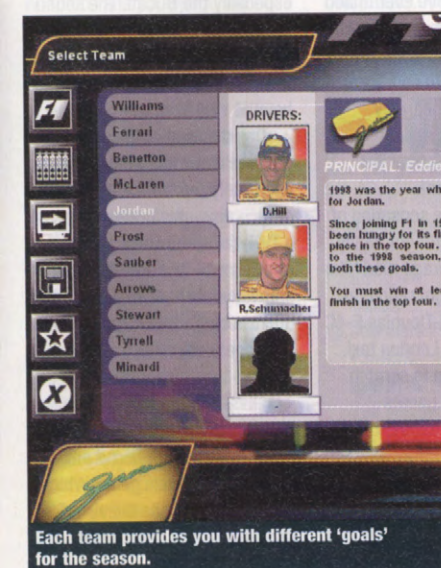
71 Not bad, if you can live with its limitations



plus side it means we've still got the likes of Toranosuke Takagi hanging around (good for comedy value).

On the negative side Jacques Villeneuve is still being arsey and refusing to let MicroProse use his name, hence 'John Newhouse' driving for Williams (presumably with his Aussie singer girlfriend Donni Minnow hanging around the pit lane). And the Stewart team

the design team page and then search for the driving aids section, and so on. It'd be OK if you were only checking one or two things between each race, but you have to micro-manage



Bolt upright at a corner?
This chap's about to hit
the shingle.



SUPERBIKE 2000

★ £34.99 • EA Sports • Out Now

Down the cogs, hang off the seat. Knee down on the apex, straighten up. Crank it open, chin on the tank. Sad old biker, Phil Wand, relives his glory days

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** DirectX 7 compatible sound and 3D cards **WE SAY** PII 300 and a Voodoo3 or GeForce 256

While many people extol the virtues of motorcycling, there are in fact just two things you need to know: first, there's no cigarette lighter, and second, you fall over when you stop. For the undeterred, there are also innumerable risks. Should the rider fall off at speed, he or she will slide along the road surface and vanish into the scenery at a fair rate of knots – this happens quite a bit, so if you hear muffled cries for an ambulance coming from a gooseberry bush, don't worry, it's only a motorcyclist.

Because of such dangers, riders have to wear a bulbous metal hat with a visor. If you open the visor, your mouth fills up with wasps and your eyes vibrate. If you close it, the wasps can't get out and you have to swallow them. On a hot day, your head feels like it's melting, and on a cold day, your nose dribbles

like Niagara Falls and you can't get a hanky close enough to wipe it.

So hey, kids, be smart and play safe – do what your mum's been asking for these past few years. Hang up your helmets, tidy your bedroom and plonk yourself down in front of EA Sport's *Superbike 2000*, the eagerly awaited follow-up to *Superbike World Championship* (PCZ #75). It's the sensible alternative to biking.

FOUR STROKES TO HEAVEN

Italian developer Milestone has once again produced a slick looking bike game. All the top names are present, including Ducati, Kawasaki, Suzuki, Honda, Yamaha and Aprilia, as are all the sponsors, thanks to an exclusive SBK *Superbike World Championship* license. While some of you may balk at the sheer number of motifs and banners stuck everywhere from

bikes to safety barriers, it actually makes everything look a whole lot more 'TV like'. Couple this with a commentary from Keith Huewen of Sky Sports and you'll begin to think you're really there.

The game features quick race, single race and championship modes, and introduces split-screen and online multiplayer options. So if you fancy a quick scratch round Donington with another wannabe Fogarty, hook up to your ISP and ride with up to eight other Internet opponents or 24 computer

“The sound changes as you accelerate, growing to encompass a mad banshee like roar at 11,000rpm”

opponents on any of the 13 accurately modelled tracks.

As with the previous instalment, the AI players can often be a little *too* resolute with their racing line, budging only when you poke a broom handle in their spokes. But that could be because they're concentrating on not falling off, or busy wondering how they're going to wipe their noses.

As before, there's a baffling array of bike setup options, ranging from the rebound damping on your front and rear shocks, to the rake and trail of your steering geometry. These seem to have little effect on the way the bike handles (we still fell off), and are probably only there to please the inveterate fiddlers among you. Some things are best left set to 'automatic' if you ask us – the transmission on a race bike is one of them.

IT'S A VESPA

Out on the track, the machines feel the same as in every other bike racing title we've ever tested – precarious. Unlike car games, the 'driver's eye' camera leans round the bends with you, making you feel unbearably queasy, and the 'chasecam' only serves to exacerbate the feeling of detachment.

There's also little sensation of speed – a disappointment, really, considering the average road bike has a power to weight ratio that makes a McDonnell-Douglas F-4C Phantom feel like a London taxi.

Sounds aren't up to scratch either. Most driving games proclaim that they feature 'real sampled audio', and they probably do – the real sampled audio of a Lambretta scooter. Come on. In real life, bikes have a

IN PERSPECTIVE

Superbike 2000 doesn't quite manage to topple *Superbike World Championship* from the two-wheeled throne, but it's still the slickest and best looking racer of the lot.

Superbike 2000

Superbike World Championship

Castrol Honda Sprbike World Champs

Castrol Honda Superbike 2000

gorgeous burble at idle, especially the Ducati. The sound changes as you accelerate, growing to encompass induction roar and a mad banshee like howl at 11,000 rpm.

One day, someone will produce a game that manages to accurately reproduce the racket of race day – the creamy bass of a TVR, the spine-tingling shriek of a Ferrari – but until that day comes, you'll have to put up with an irate bluebottle trapped inside your speakers.

AH. YES. THE SCORE

Underneath the glossy paint and sponsor's logos, *Superbike 2000* is still a motorcycle game. Which means that, despite the visual razzmatazz, you have to use



The game provides lots of waffle about every bike, rider and track.



That's a big tyre! Ha ha ha!

accelerator help, brake help, extra brake power, automatic brake, auto rider movement, rider assist and automatic gears before your bucking motor-donkey even begins to feel vaguely obedient. And while the vast array of rider aids do make the game quite playable, they also anaesthetise the experience. All you need is a lone finger planted on the throttle and, together with the occasional dab at the left and right cursor keys, even your computer-phobic dad could wobble his way round the Nürburgring and stay out of the kitty litter.

Try the same circuit without rider aids and you spend the whole time alternating between massive wheelies, cannoning off other riders and tipping gravel out of your helmet. Like every other title in the genre, there seems to be no middle ground: you're either so unable to fall off it feels like you've got stabilisers, or you're pulling your head from between tyres on the tyre wall. Or possibly both. To its credit, Milestone does allow users to tweak the level of rider aids, for example allowing you to specify 50 per cent extra brake power instead of the full 200 per cent, but there's still a fine line between a playable setup and a farcical one.

And you know what? It's a darn shame. The graphics are

some of the most realistic we've ever seen (rider animation is nothing short of staggering), the interface and presentation are up to EA's usual high standards, and there are more multiplayer options and Internet shenanigans than you can shake a phone bill at. But while we veered from verge to verge, fingers crossed we'd stay planted in the saddle, our one recurring thought was: 'wouldn't this make a great car game?' Wouldn't it be good if we were at the wheel of a Honda NSX and not hunched over a Honda RC45?

So we feel that a message needs to be sent to the developer community. Please, folks, *please*. Stop making motorcycle games. They just don't cut it. [PCZ]

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Bugger-me visuals and animation • Attention is paid to every minute detail • Split-screen option • Online multiplayer

DOWNERS It's a bike game • Steep learning curve • Sounds are a bit disappointing • More spills than thrills

78 Terrific engine needs four wheels under it



Scenery and detailing is superb. Witness Carl Fogerty's digitised mug.



With twenty odd bikes in view, things can get real sluggish.



Failed to finish. Yet again.



Super composed, super relaxed. Honest.



Riders twist their wrists just before the green light.

A BIKER BABBLES

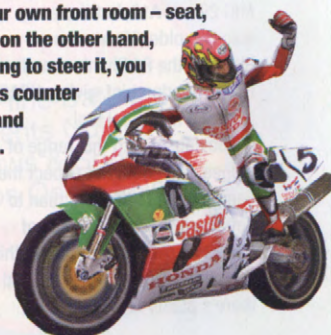
Wandy explains his love of bikes and his hatred of bike games

Had you been looking over my shoulder as I struggled round Monza, cursing every approaching bend and demanding a replacement Ferrari, chances are you'd think motorcycles were a pet hate. Not at all – I have the appropriate license and my very own plastic suicide rocket in the garage. It's just that bike games don't work.

When I first sat down in front of *Superbike 2000*, my initial thought was that I was doing something wrong, or I was being a dufus. But then I remembered this was the way *every* bike game played, and looking back through past issues it's clear that other people feel the same way. Car games make an easy transition from circuit to screen; motorcycle games don't. They never have and they never will.

Why? Because you can easily reproduce a race car cockpit in your own front room – seat, steering wheel, pedals, gear shift, the whole shootin' match. A bike, on the other hand, is so much more than a set of controls. You don't push or pull anything to steer it, you shift your weight. You perform some actions subconsciously, such as counter steer and counter balance. You brake independently front and rear, and change gear using your foot and your left hand to engage the clutch. Totally involving, and at the same time rather alarming.

So there will *never* be a good bike sim, in the same way there will never be a decent eating sim. While the simple mechanics can easily be reproduced with dabs at the keyboard or tugs on the joystick, there's a lot more to it than simple movements. Stuff that you simply can't get across using a standard PC.



JANE'S USAF

★ £34.99 • EA • Out Now

There's absolutely nothing amusing about the title of this game, so we told Dave Mathieson to just get on with the review instead

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Pentium 200 **Memory** 64Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** Direct3D graphics card **WE SAY** PII 350, 16Mb graphics card

**PCZONE
RECOMMENDED**

Unlike their WWII counterparts, flight sims based on modern jets usually only model a single plane and do it well enough to convince your average hardcore sim buff that, instead of sitting in his bedroom waiting for his mum to cook his tea, he is, in fact, flying at 100ft over Iraq desperately avoiding SAMs on a vital mission to bomb a baby-milk factory.

Total realism isn't everyone's cup of tea, however, and most people just can't be arsed to

“Being able to jump to where the action is hottest really convinces you that you're part of a much bigger conflict, providing tons of that all-important immersion”

learn to fly a 'real' pretend plane, but are looking for the same things as other PC games players: excitement, immersion, decent graphics and all that other stuff that comes under the heading 'Gameplay'.

As luck would have it, *Jane's USAF* has this in droves. *USAF* is a jet sim that allows you to fly several different planes, all of which, with one exception, are used (or have been used) by the US Airforce. The modern ones are the F15, F16, F117, F22, MiG 29 and A10, but there are also two older, Vietnam-era planes – the F4 Phantom and F105 Thunderchief, giving *USAF* a bit of a historical feel.

Obviously with this range of planes, you shouldn't expect the complete and utter attention to detail provided by the likes of *Flanker 2.0* and *Falcon 4*, but this is no lightweight sim either, and there's plenty for the more

humourless sim fan to get to grips with.

I LOVE THE SMELL OF NAPALM BEFORE TEA-TIME

No self-respecting flight sim these days is without a decent set of campaigns and *USAF* is no exception.

Aside from the obligatory Iraq scenario, there are futuristic Russians-invade-Germany and USA-training-area campaigns and, more interestingly, Vietnam. The Iraq and 'Nam campaigns are a set of missions loosely based on the conflicts in question – fun, but not up with the dynamic action we've come to expect from the campaign engines of games like *Total Air War*. The futuristic scenarios are more like it, though,

and you only have limited resources and pilots to play with.

Of course, no one wades straight into campaigns, and *USAF* has plenty of single missions and training to get you acclimatised. The training missions are split into sections: weapons and air combat, and you're guided through each by the calm bedside manner of your instructor.

The single missions are pre-scripted or ones that you've designed yourself. This is done using either of the two mission editors – one for quickly setting up simple combat scenarios and another more complicated one that allows you to create your own scripted missions.

The campaign and single missions in *USAF* are excellent, and the enemy's AI makes sure nothing is too easy. But best of all you can jump into the cockpit of other planes and either passively

watch, or fly them. Although *Total Air War* enables you to do this, you can only fly other F22s. *USAF*'s choice of planes means you can fly any of the planes modelled in the game. Although this is completely unrealistic, being able to jump to where the action is hottest really convinces you that you're

part of a much bigger conflict, providing tons of that all-important immersion.

One of the most essential ingredients for any sim is the graphics and *USAF*'s are superb. The terrain looks great, the planes are stunning and the lighting is spot on, so that sunset and sunrise missions give you that 'glad to be alive' feeling. You'll need a pretty beefy PC to get a decent frame rate, though, but you shouldn't really expect to get away with anything less than a 350MHz CPU for sims these days anyway.

Overall, *USAF* is a great all-round game. While it veers slightly away from the hardcore end of the market, there's plenty here for anyone interested in sims, and the range of planes, lush graphics and well-thought out missions and campaigns make it hard to criticise. **PCZ**

IN PERSPECTIVE

Total Air War is a bit older, but has better campaigns. Similarly, *Jane's F15* looks a bit dated in comparison, but *Falcon 4* still rules the roost.

Jane's USAF

Jane's F15

Total Air War

Falcon 4

PCZ VERDICT

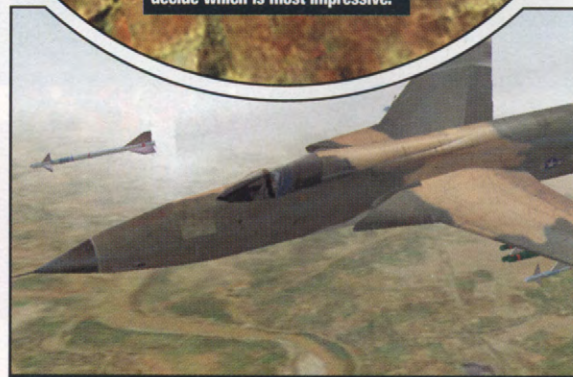
UPPERS Easy to get into, great graphics, lots of planes

DOWNERS Not as realistic as some

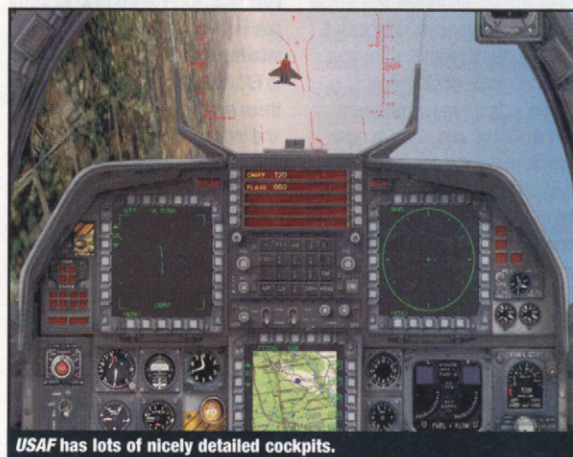
85 Great all round sim with lots of planes



Evel Knievel did it in a motorbike. You can fly over the Grand Canyon in an F22. We'll let the chicks decide which is most impressive.



The F105 Thunderchief was the '60s equivalent of the F15.



USAF has lots of nicely detailed cockpits.



There's nothing like a good explosion to liven things up.



Fantasy: Beautifully photographed shots of some of the most gorgeous women in the world. Order prints of your favourite pictures on-line.



Virtual Photoshoot: Enter our virtual studio and take control of a Maxim cover shoot before designing your own Maxim cover.



Score with Lovely Courtney: Can you get to first base with lovely Courtney. Put your chatting up technique to the test in our virtual bar.

the web magazine for men



FEATURING

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- Albums
- Movies
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- Interactive Features
- Chat

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Think you know all about pop culture? Take the Maxim Culture Quiz and win a year's subscription to the magazine

MORE GREAT STUFF!

- On-line Dating
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- Shops On The Net

AND MUCH, MUCH MORE...



A great way to gain xps – stand on a tower and keep shooting...



Portals are the Dereth equivalent of the London tube.



You don't need a single GCSE to use the combat system.



Wasps tend to be a little bigger in Dereth.



You can run between towns, but it's safer and quicker to go by portal.

ASHERON'S CALL

★ £34.99 • Microsoft • Out now

**Has Microsoft lost the plot completely?
Or was *Asheron's Call* designed that way?
Andrew Wright is our man on the case...**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 or better **Memory** 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D graphics card, Internet connection **SUPPORTS** DirectX-compatible sound cards
WE SAY 3D card essential

Games like *Planescape: Torment* and *Baldur's Gate* are always labelled as RPGs but that's more to do with their AD&D heritage than any true role-playing element. Let's face it, role-playing isn't deciding whether you want to be a magic user or a thief, or tough or intelligent or whatever. It's about creating an imaginary character complete with its own strengths and weaknesses and then playing a game with those choices in mind. To have any chance of doing that in a computer game, you have to be able to interact with other human-controlled characters. Take multiplayer online games like *Everquest* and *Ultima Online*. You create a character and then wander about in a virtual world,

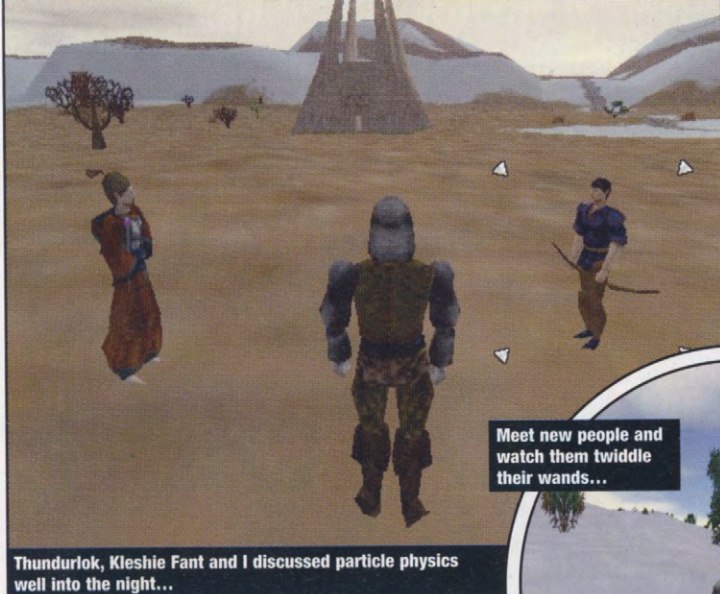
meeting thousands of other players and monsters, and hacking and slaying your way to wherever you want to be. You can fulfill in-game quests or help other less powerful characters. Or you can rob, steal and cheat them until you go blind. While *Asheron's Call* sits squarely in the same round hole, the graphics are at least a generation ahead. There's not much new in terms of gameplay, but the 3D accelerated views, rapid scrolling and distinct lack of lag make it spectacular to look at and wonderfully smooth to play. **TILL DERETH US DO PART** *Asheron's Call* revolves around the world of Dereth, an island continent complete with towns

and tunnels, doors and dungeons, and populated with varying grades of monster, from the downright weak (like the common rabbit) to the all-powerful (the fearful olthoi). It even has different geographic regions from dry deserts, rivers and lakes to wooded hills and snow-covered mountains. Even the underground locations all look different, whether they're rough caves or purpose-built dungeons. Dereth is a huge place with around 25 towns in all, each with at least half-a-dozen shops. Dotted around the towns are magic portals, which offer a safe, rapid form of travel between the towns. Wandering across the country as a low-level character isn't a good idea even along a road, as it's easy to get overwhelmed by monsters. Also in the towns are non-player characters or NPCs who will hand out quests or

give you cash in exchange for trophies – bits of dead monsters. The quest items – and almost all the monsters – respawn within a certain time frame, so everyone has a chance to complete a quest. **PERSONALITY CRISIS** Your online persona can be one of three slightly different human races and seven professions: archer, blademaker, enchanter, life mage, sorcerer, vagabond or warrior. Sorcerers use attack spells, enchanters cast spells on items or other people, and life mages are healers – the equivalent of AD&D's clerics. Likewise, bladesters are specialists in swordplay, warriors use several weapon types, and archers, unsurprisingly, use bows and arrows. Vagabonds (alias thieves) are probably the weakest class and use stealth and deception to get by.

If one of these classes doesn't appeal, you can adjust your character's vital statistics and play as an adventurer, choosing the skills you want to specialise in. That way you can create custom characters – a mage with healing skills, a warrior with spellcasting ability or an archer that can pick locks. Other skills include alchemy, cooking and fletching, which allow you to create various things and sell them on. For example, you can turn a dead cow into stew, sticks into arrows and gems into powder for use as spell components. There are several hundred spells available to magic-users, just as there are several hundred weapon and armour types for fighters, some magical, some not, some puny, some godlike. The interesting thing about using magic is that you have to use spell components. You start off with a handful of spells in your repertoire and have to learn others by experimenting or finding other players who will help you out. While the graphics in *Asheron's Call* are reminiscent of



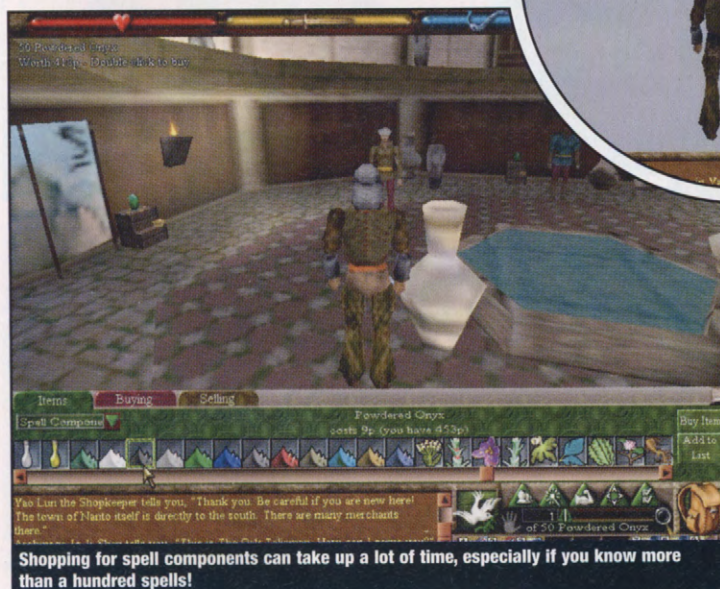


Thundurlok, Kleshie Fant and I discussed particle physics well into the night...

Meet new people and watch them twiddle their wands...



Looks quiet, but those orange dots on the radar screen mean there's danger nearby.



Shopping for spell components can take up a lot of time, especially if you know more than a hundred spells!



The training hall lets you get used to your weapons and spells.

many of today's online shoot 'em ups, there's one big difference – you can't harm other players. It's probably the right decision because it means the newest of all newbies can stand there in a crowded marketplace without worrying whether a passing 33rd level wizard is going to use him for target practice. Actually, he could but the spell wouldn't have any effect.

ROLE ON UP

Is this real role-playing? I doubt it very much. For every player who takes it seriously, there's another who takes the piss completely.

“While the graphics in *Asheron's Call* are reminiscent of online shoot 'em ups, there's one big difference – you can't harm other players”

Some players (bless their little cotton socks) talk in archaic 'fantasy world' language, while others talk only about their stats and easy ways to beat the system. If you're serious about your RPGs, you might find other characters' behaviour annoying. Likewise, if all you need are the co-ordinates for the nearest

dungeon, and you don't want to wade through lines of chat, spiced up with 'pray', 'thou' and 'art'.

Announce yourself in the local tavern as Haggard the Grimm, a mage of some repute in these parts, and it's ten-to-one someone will tell you he's a level eight mage and only needs 800xps to go to the next level... Tell them your sword is a mighty weapon for truth and justice and some smart arse will always point out it has +10 melee defence and 120 mana. Happily, both types of player – and everyone in between – are catered for in *Asheron's Call*.

virtually every action can be carried out at the press of a key. You can also customise the controls.

ENTER THE EXPENSIVE ZONE

Access to the game is via the Microsoft Zone and at present there are six different servers running *Asheron's Call*, each with the same game world, but different player characters. You can have up to five characters on each server, but can only play one at a time. Obviously. There's also hardly any lag on any of the servers despite there being

you many hours to get up the levels. If you're prepared to sit and bash re-spawning monsters for hours on end, you'll move up the ranks, but my first character (admittedly a badly thought-out one) took 17 online hours to get to 6th level.

That also makes it expensive. Aside from your telephone and any ISP charges, you'll also have to pay Microsoft £9.99 a month to continue playing after the first free month and you can't do anything at all – even move items from one slot to another – without being online. How high you can reach I don't know, although I've 'met' a 44th level mage already. Oh, for free local calls...

For some, *Asheron's Call* will be the best thing since the eight-sided dice and little lead models, but others will be overwhelmed by the sheer pointlessness of it. Before you part with your money, think long and hard about whether you want a massive open-ended adventure or a more tightly-plotted experience like *Planescape: Torment*. **PCZ**

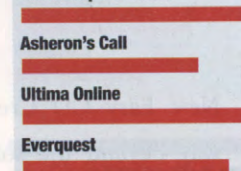
upwards of 1,500 players on each at the time of review.

On the minus side, the combat interface is awkward and the auto-targeting of monsters is a bit hit and miss. Ha, ha, get the joke? Travel between towns is hard for anyone under 6-7th level, as the open countryside is filled with difficult monsters, and it will take

IN PERSPECTIVE

Everquest and *Ultima Online* are online RPGs in the same mould, and *UO* is still our favourite. *Planescape: Torment* is a superb adventure and RPG, but it doesn't have the online multiplayer aspect.

Planescape Torment



PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS** Great 3D graphics • Realistic terrain • Addictive gameplay • Lots of weapons and spells
- DOWNERS** Slow progress • Expensive • Feels like a teenage chat room at times

76 Not the best online RPG, but still a good romp

We move the information that moves your world.

adaptec

NEW

EASY CD CREATOR 4 DELUXE

MP3

MUSIC

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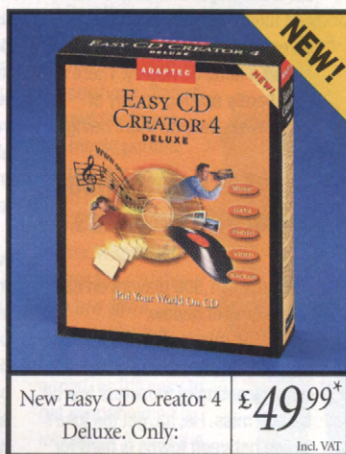
BACKUP

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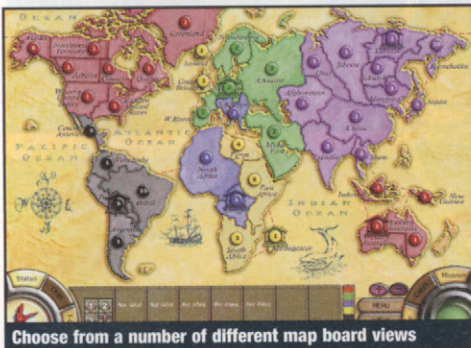
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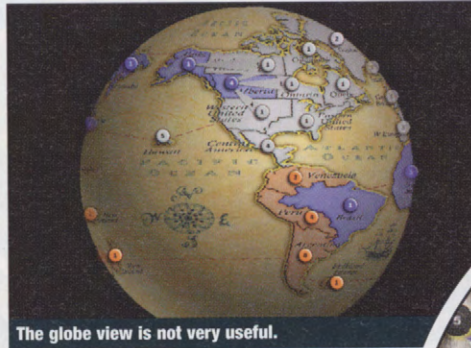
The 3D battles are nice. For a while.



The only way to keep the colonies in order.



Choose from a number of different map board views



The globe view is not very useful.



You won't get views like this around your coffee table.



Guess what country this is? See – fun and educational.

RISK 2

★ £34.99 • Hasbro Interactive • Out Now

Apparently everybody wants to rule the world. *Richie Shoemaker* just needs to see a bit more of it outside of his front door

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb **WE SAY** For a no-frills game, a P166 just about cuts it

PCZONE
RECOMMENDED

Everyone remembers their first game of *Risk*. Just like the first brush of a kiss or the initial fumbblings at the back of the cinema, once invited to join the fun, you know you're no longer one of the little people.

You only have to go to a car boot sale to realise how popular *Risk* is because, no matter how hard you look, you'll never find one for sale (at least not the classic '70s version with the 'oil drum' and 'Toblerone' pieces).

Even the windswept balding husband selling such classics as *Hungry Hippos*, *Mike Reid's Pop Quiz* and *Mastermind* – at 50p

each – will shrug at the mention of *Risk*: "Me and me boys, we decided to keep that one," the father will say. He could have charged at least a pound.

On PC, *Risk* has never been in quite the same league as its board game counterpart. In this day and age of real-time strategy and Internet gaming, the humble

“Best of all, however, is that the developer Deep Red has recreated a classic board game successfully to the PC”

'game of world domination' has been fighting a losing battle and nowhere better was this highlighted than with Hasbro's previous PC rendition of *Risk*, where, along with the vanilla version, was something called 'Ultimate Risk' – which although fun, just wasn't... *Risk*.

DICING WITH DEATH

Risk 2 on the other hand is more like it. As well as your 'Classic' *Risk* where the computer and human players take it in turns to take over the world, there is a new mode called 'Same Time Risk'. Developed primarily for the impatient multiplayer, the 'Same Time' game is something of a minor masterpiece and, although it changes a few rules and requires a slightly different way of thinking, it still feels remarkably familiar.

How it works is, all players plan their attacks simultaneously. Then, once done, the computer

resolves each conflict in turn; armies going for each other's territories fight first, followed by invasions on more than one front etc, etc. For the battles themselves, virtual 12-sided dice are used, which may sound a bit too *Dungeons & Dragons*, but actually works surprisingly well.

A third type of game on offer for those who prefer playing on their own is the Tournament game. Offering a set of 16 scenarios based on both sets of rules (some taking advantage of extra countries and new rule variations), it allows players to take on each of the 16 computer-controlled generals, with each general displaying a range of traits that can adjust to your style of play over time.

Where perhaps *Risk 2* is a little disappointing is that it is actually quite tricky to tell the AI players apart, but as a whole the AI is very good once you've had a chance to test each general out. Elsewhere the interface is a breeze and the graphics manage to be both attractive and functional. The way the camera sweeps in to show the battle sequences soon becomes repetitive, but thankfully it can be switched off.

Best of all, however, is that for once, someone – in this case developer Deep Red – has recreated a classic board game successfully to PC and done it well. *Risk 2* manages to be both true to its roots and innovative at the same time. **PCZ**

IN PERSPECTIVE

As board game conversions go, *Risk 2* exceeds everything else released so far. It's nearly as good as the real thing, in fact.

Risk (board game)

Risk 2

Axis & Allies

Diplomacy

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS 'Classic' game remains faithful to the board game original • Same Time *Risk* is innovative and fun and fantastic for multiplayer games • Innovative AI system for single-player games...

DOWNERS ... which is too easy to beat • Battle view becomes quickly redundant

81 Faithful and innovative

RISING SUN

★ £34.99 • Take 2 • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM

WE SAY P266, 64Mb RAM, 8Mb graphics card

Rising Sun is the third in Talonsoft's revolutionary Campaign series of World War II wargames, following on from *East Front* and *West Front*. It uses the same tried-and-tested game system as the other titles, but this time it deals with the war in the Pacific against Japan.

There are no major new features in this sequel, although *Rising Sun* does give you a completely different wargaming flavour, characterised by amphibious tanks and landing craft, paratroop drops and naval gun support as well as special rules for the Japanese side. These include Banzai attacks and the use of caves as fortifications.

More than 30 ready-made scenarios are included in the game, ranging from the beaches of Tarawa, Guadalcanal and Okinawa to the jungles of Burma. Four linked campaign games are also included. New terrain types on offer include kunai (elephant grass), palm orchards, light and dense jungle, paddy fields and coral reefs.

The Allied side includes US and Commonwealth forces – encompassing British, Australian, Indian and New Zealand units – plus a complete listing of all the vehicles, artillery and armour types used in the Pacific theatre by both sides.

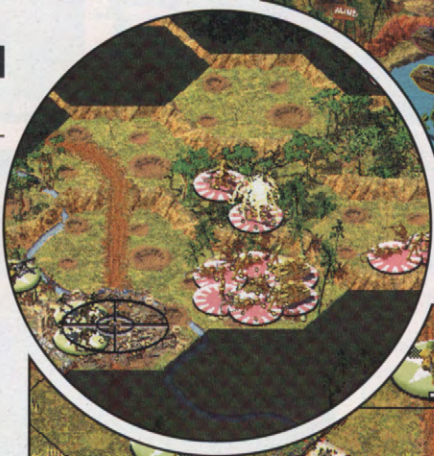
The Campaign series is undoubtedly at the top of the wargaming tree as far as WWII games are concerned and *Rising Sun* is a welcome addition. It makes full use of high-resolution displays and, although it demands 16-bit colour, the results are well worth it. You can even switch between traditional 2D and 3D views of the battlefield and the game features authentic video footage, ambient battle noise and full sound effects.

Rising Sun supports multiplayer mode where up to eight players per side can battle it out over the Internet or a LAN. However, wargames stand or fall on the quality of the artificial intelligence involved and, like the earlier titles, *Rising Sun* is a challenging if occasionally predictable opponent.

Andrew Wright

PCZVERDICT

78%



Eat your heart out Hirohito – the marines are here.



Visit fabulous worlds! Get stuck behind space boulders!

ARMY MEN IN SPACE

★ £34.99 • 3DO • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM

WE SAY P166, 32Mb RAM if you must play it

PCZONE PANTS

The first game was awful. The second game was awful. There seems to be a pattern forming here. One which the developer has no intention of breaking with the third title in the series. Once again you play Sarge, the plastic soldier, keeping the world safe from alien invasion. The 'In Space' part of the title is a little misleading as only the last three of the 11 levels are actually set on another planet, the rest are played out on the familiar locations of bathroom floors, picnic rugs and the like.

You can control other units, but Sarge is the only one able to use the power-ups (fly swatter, magnifying glasses, etc) scattered around to your advantage. And it's just as well as it's rather hard without them. Even the first level took more than several attempts to finish and tactics usually devolve into either rushing the enemy with all your troops or inching across the

map taking out targets individually. You can divide your enemy into squads but don't expect them to survive long if you're not taking care of them, as the AI is absolutely abominable.

Soldiers can spend minutes getting around a simple piece of scenery and sometimes even each other. One mission even saw me sacrifice a truck full of refugees who had found themselves stuck fast to a sponge just to finish the damn thing. Thank God it's so short, then. There are the now obligatory skirmish and multiplayer options thrown in, in an attempt to extend the longevity, but they stink just as much.

Quite why 3DO continues to flog such a rotting, maggot-infested carcass of a horse is anybody's guess. The only explanation I can think of is that the programmers are being eternally punished for their sins after some botched attempt at invoking the power of Satan. Or something.

James Lyon

PCZVERDICT

19%

Q*BERT

★ £19.99 • Hasbro • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** Does the job nicely

Look – it's *Q*Bert*. You don't need to read the review, do you? If you misspent your youth hanging around laundrettes and fish and chip shops, then you probably know everything you need to know about this cult arcade classic. If you're too young to remember the halcyon days of video gaming, then how about the hip-hop connection? DJ Q*Bert? One of the best DJs in the world? That's how cool this game is.

If you've never heard of it, think *Pac Man* on acid. You have to guide Q*Bert (an orange bouncy thing) across different pyramid-shaped levels. Every time you bounce off a square it changes colour. When you've turned the whole level the right colour you can move off and take another one on. Easy, huh? Well, it would be if it wasn't for the bouncing balls and snakes, not to mention the other *Q*Bert*-type creatures bouncing around undoing all your hard work.

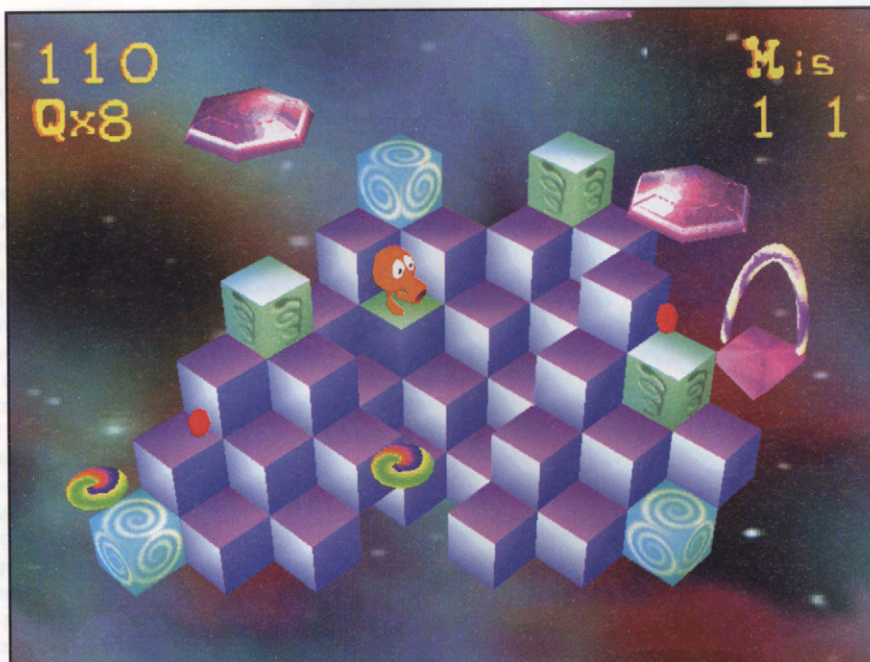
Thankfully, Atari hasn't changed the concept one iota, and for that reason this is an essential purchase for old-skoolers. It's got the same hypnotic quality that's the trademark of early videogames, and once you lock into the strange controls you'll be gone... literally. The sounds are superb, and the mock swear words are still present and correct.

New additions include the excellent perspective changes and an adventure mode, but the lack of network or Internet options is a tad disappointing. You can go head-to-head on the same screen though, which goes some way towards compensation. Some might say that its appeal is still limited, but we'd counter that by saying it's one of the best early arcade conversions you can get. Having said that, a game like this is never going to snatch a classic rating, but as *Q*Bert* himself would say, it's still "???" brilliant.

Dave Woods

PCZVERDICT

65%



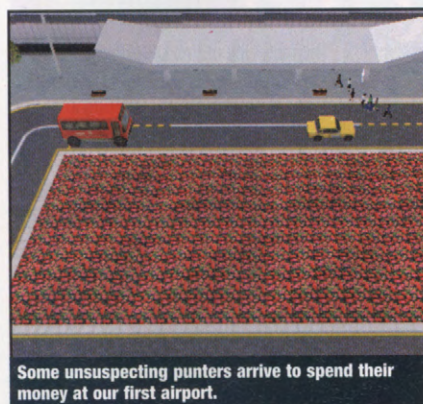
Turn the squares and dodge the beasts.



One thing's for sure, they just don't make 'em like this any more.

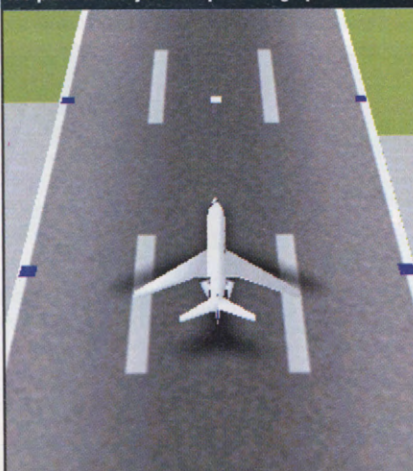


As you can see, the new adventure mode adds some rather fiendish levels.



Some unsuspecting punters arrive to spend their money at our first airport.

It's plane to see just how plain the graphics are.



AIRPORT INC

★ £34.99 • Take 2 • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** PII400, 64Mb RAM and a 16Mb graphics card

If *Airport Inc* were a person, it would be one whose start in life has put them at a natural disadvantage to everyone else. You know, the type with stupid names like Hector and an unhealthy affinity with model railways. Come on? Who really wants to build and manage their own airport?

Still, horses for courses and all that, and we're here to review the game, not the concept. And, for those prepared to see past the title, or those who've always dreamed of building their own Gatwick, there is some entertainment to be had.

An incredibly long winded but nonetheless informative tutorial teaches you the basics, which offers massive help to the beginner. Then, after choosing the continent, country, city and location of your proposed business, you must buy land and construct your airport on it.

This is where the first glaring inadequacy becomes visible. Each city has three locations to choose from, but unfortunately they're almost exactly the same no-matter where they're located geographically. The only real difference is the varying

weather conditions of each continent, which can cause hazards and delays to planes using your runways.

To start with, it's actually rather surprising just how engrossing *Airport Inc* can be. Furbishing your terminal, negotiating contracts with airlines and caterers, managing your finances and, most importantly, keeping your customers happy initially makes the game a great deal of fun. But this feeling doesn't last for more than a day, and it soon becomes apparent just how basic the gameplay is.

From the dreadfully dated graphics and annoying sound, to the sheer mindlessness of following suggestions given to rectify problems. It's all too easy, repetitive and subsequently just a tad boring. If someone had paid a little more attention to *Airport Inc*'s development, perhaps the end result wouldn't have been so poor. As it is, this can only be a game for beginners of the genre, or for those who would kill for the opportunity to build their own airport. It's a shame, as it does show some glimmers of potential, despite its off-putting theme.

Martin Korda

PCZVERDICT

37%



Nice and colourful, rather than gritty and realistic.



A bridge too far?



A lava pit turns the heat up.

TZAR: BURDEN OF THE CROWN

★ £34.99 • Zabrac • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** Some of the maps are huge, so too will be the system requirements

Taking the skewed isometric fantasy world of *WarCraft II* and the four-way resource management of *Age Of Empires*, *Tzar: The Burden Of The Crown* comes across immediately as the mewling offspring of a drunken union between the two games – as if each one, through beer goggles clouded with lust, had copped off at a party.

The thing with *Tzar* is that although it's a perfectly playable real-time strategy game, the thought continually crosses your mind that what you really should be doing is playing *Age Of Empires II*. Let's do the math: *Age* has 12 races to choose from, *Tzar* has three. Both games have the same four resources to collect (stone, gold, wood and grub) and roughly the same units (villagers, knights, cavalry, siege engines, etc). Where the games differ is that while *Tzar* has a fair old stab at injecting RPG elements and magic, *Age* has that quality feel, is packed with features and perfectly balanced.

Why have cotton when you can have silk? Well the graphics, animation, story and AI are all better in *Age Of Empires II*, but what *Tzar* lacks in the feel of its cloth, it almost makes up in charm. The single-player campaign may be twee, girly bollocks, but the huge skirmish maps offer many a burly battle. *Tzar* is an enjoyable game, not the best by any means, but a pleasing fantasy romp all the same.

Richie Shoemaker

PCZVERDICT

65%

TREADMARKS MISSILE COMMAND

★ \$34.95 (buy online only) • Longbow Digital Arts • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major 3D cards **WE SAY** Double the processor and memory

It must have seemed like a good idea at the time. Get a load of tanks, a load of 3D courses, scatter a few power-ups around, then sit back and watch the carnage. Unfortunately, the execution is about as successful as Houdini's last escape.

The major problem is that the courses are completely and utterly boring. They all look and play exactly the same – ie dreadfully dull textures and tracks that just go round and round in circles until you fall

asleep. The power-up weapons look nice, but trying to hit someone with any of the assorted missiles is nigh-on impossible.

Where the game does score is in the Battle region. Forget the racing and take on your mates around degradable terrains. It's a lot more fun, and highly customisable. The controls take a bit of getting used to, but persevere and *Treadmarks* turns into an enjoyable blast. It's still got big flaws, but it's an interesting diversion from today's overhyped releases.

Dave Woods

PCZVERDICT

56%

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** Whatever

Missile Command was a great game in the same way that A Flock Of Seagulls were a great band – you may have fond memories of both, but sadly it takes more than a 21st century haircut to bridge the 20-year gap.

For sure the graphically updated 'Classic' game looks nice and bright, but the Orwellian paranoia – the threat of Armageddon – is what made *Missile Command* such a poignant game. Now it's just a faceless, cartoon, coffee-break blaster, albeit a good one.

The inclusion of the 'Ultimate' game mode is obviously where the bucks have been spent (read wasted). Offering a 3D rendition of the world, you man an anchored pod, able to scan the skies *Quake*-style while the missiles rain down for you to blast out of the 3D sky. The whole thing is pointless, basically, and should have been left in the ideas bin.

If you want to play *Missile Command* as God intended, get a time machine, or an emulator. And that bit about the Seagulls being a great band was a lie, obviously.

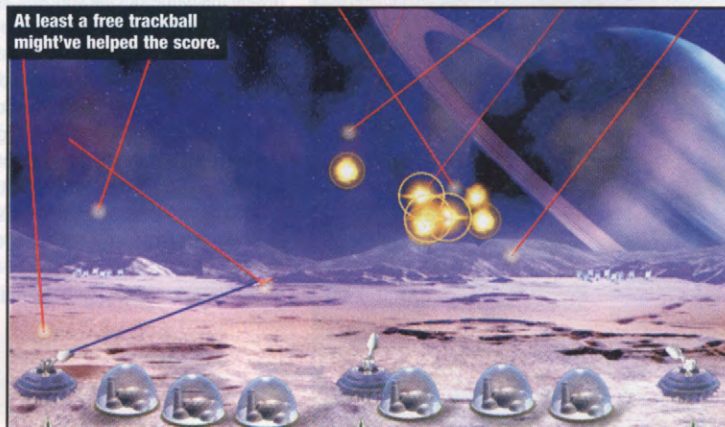
Richie Shoemaker

PCZVERDICT

40%



Loads of tanks trying hard to have fun. Yesterday.



At least a free trackball might've helped the score.

LEGO ROCK RAIDERS

★ £34.99 • Lego Media • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM

WE SAY PII400, 64Mb RAM

Coinciding with the release of a new range from Lego, *Rock Raiders* involves the titular Legomen mining for crystals on distant planets. Sinister advertising opportunities aside, this is yet another 3D RTS game, this time with the emphasis on resource collecting. Set over 25 levels, your main task is to drill for ore in the surrounding rocks, construct a base and collect enough energy crystals to power your spaceship. And that's about as exciting as it gets. Almost every level begins with you spending the best part of an hour going through exactly the same routine of building and scavenging, the only real difference being the surrounding textures – a selection consisting of lava, ice or, er, rock. The maps seem to have been drawn entirely at random, making finding and collecting the crystals an unnecessarily drawn-out procedure. Every once in a while a

monster might decide to attack if it's got nothing better to do, though don't expect anything more thrilling than pressing a few buttons.

It's commendable that your characters automatically find something to do if not given a task, but not when they decide to go to the other side of the map just to pick something up that they could have found only a few feet away. Especially since they seem to take ages bringing it back. And you might as well forget about direct control – as soon as you tell your character to do something he'll automatically deselect himself. Getting him to do more than one thing requires more clicks than a dolphin's conversation.

OK, the old argument goes that it's aimed at kids, but why should they have to put up with the kind of stuff that older people wouldn't bother with? It's an uninspiring product tacked onto a licence that does nothing more than make you want to play with the real stuff.

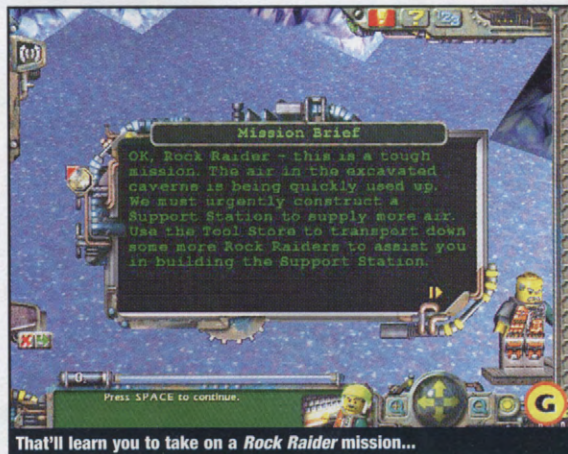
James Lyon

PCZVERDICT

44%



Cold, dark, inhospitable. The game or the caverns?



That'll learn you to take on a Rock Raider mission...

Isn't this where Lara Croft got mangled by logs?



Pong's not long for this world.

PONG

★ £19.99 • Hasbro Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** You can make it look prettier, but that was never the point

Updating simple classics is a tricky and highly risky business, and games don't get any more classic or simple than *Pong*. A perennial answer in the developer's Q&A to the question: 'What's the first game you ever played?'

Pong first dazzled households with its two moving sticks and one bouncing square way back in 1972. Leaps in technology being scarcer and rather millimetric back then, there's a good chance you'd have played it in the late '70s and early '80s, but why would you play it now? You wouldn't, of course, especially when the updating has been done in such a fumbling, half-arsed, mess of a way. The colours are garish, the gameplay irritating – even in a two-player game – and the interface tortuously unfriendly. This is like trying to make your granny sexy by sticking her in red lycra panties and painting her face with cheap lipstick. Disgusting.

Mark Hill

PCZVERDICT

28%

MINI-GOLF MASTER

★ £19.99 • eGames • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** Check out the shareware sites for something better

PCZONE PANTS

With a name like *Mini-Golf* you know you're not going to get a game in the mould of *PGA Championship*. What you might expect is a little bit of fun, but no. In fact, *Mini-Golf* is one of the most repetitive games that we've ever had the misfortune to play. Yes, there are four different courses (Planet Miniverse, Space Holes, The Suburbs and War Torn) and, yes, there are different themes on each hole. But the more holes you play, the more they simply blend into one.

Putting a ball is more a matter of luck than skill or judgement, and the graphics are dark, with the putting area only taking up a relatively small amount of the screen. We still maintain that this could have been quite a good game if more time had been spent on it. As a result, we've ended up with a very half-hearted attempt at what is basically a half-hearted game.

Eddy Francis

PCZVERDICT

18%

An aptly positioned toilet.



PCZ SUPERTEST SPACE SHOOT

➔ Left to right: Steve Hill reviewed *Descent 3* ★ Richie Shoemaker reviewed *FreeSpace 2* and *X - Beyond The Frontier* ★ Paul Mallinson (middle) wishes he'd reviewed *X-Wing Alliance* ★ Paul Presley (top) is always 'out of space' ★ Martin Korda (below) is a Wing Commander Nut.



'EM UPS

After some debate over the title of this Supertest, *PC ZONE* finally got together to debate the quality of space shoot 'em ups. Cockpit king: *Paul Mallinson*

The space combat shoot 'em up has been around since the dawn of the home computer. In the early '80s *Star Raiders* (for the Atari VCS), and *Star Gate* (for the Sinclair Spectrum), inadvertently set a template for first-person, cockpit-based shoot 'em ups, which would later be



← taken further and further with the invention of 3D (or 'vector') graphics early on in the '90s.

Since then, space combat (or whatever combination of 'space', 'cockpit', 'combat' or 'shoot 'em up' you care to mention) shooters have never looked back, and over the past few years we've been treated to such classics as *Star Strike* (ZX Spectrum), *Star Wars* (arcade), *Mercenary* (C64), *Carrier Command* (ST and Amiga), *Elite* (BBC Micro, Acorn Electron and just about every other home computer available at the time), *Wing Commander* (PC), and *Star Wing* (SNES) to fulfill our boyish, space-bound fantasies.

Years of reading *2000AD*, watching crap sci-fi telly, Cold War paranoia and real-life space exploration – not to mention *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* – has created a generation of house-bound sci-fi escapist, of which we are all members, and space combat shoot 'em ups seem to be an ideal fuel for our burning desire for credible science fiction, twinned with simple, mindless violence.

All five of the games featured in this month's 'Supertest' show us where we're at, right now. They are the 'stars' (*Groan – Ed*) of the space shoot 'em up phenomenon, but which one – the **PC ZONE** team once again ask themselves – shines the brightest?

DESCENT 3

Steve: *Descent* was the first PC game I ever reviewed, and I thought it was great.

That's because I just didn't know any different.

Richie: And you're only here out of loyalty?

Steve: Yeah, they were great days... before I got washed-up on the beach of the games industry.

Steve: *Descent 3* shouldn't even be in here though.

Mallo: Why shouldn't it? It's a sci-fi shoot 'em up, and there are exterior sections that do lend quite a bit to the game.

Steve: OK, so you skim along the surface of a planet for a bit, the whole thing slows to a crawl, so you go back underground.

Mallo: You gave it a high '80s' score when you reviewed it – what's your problem?

Steve: It is a good game – I played it for hours last night.

It's alright. It's got some interesting music...

Everyone: (Laughs)

Mallo: And that's about it!

Steve: *Descent 3* is quite hypnotic.

Mallo: I don't know about hypnotic – it's disorienting if anything. Out of all the games here today, it's the easiest to lose track of what you're doing.

Steve: Yeah, that's why all you do is follow that guide robot thing.

Mallo: It's got quite a few auto-righting features.

Prez: What?

Mallo: If you're upside down and pointing at the ceiling, you can press a button that will right your ship so you can get your bearings. Having said that, this feature can work against you

because sometimes you end up fighting it to get to where you want to go to.

Steve: It'd be unplayable if you didn't have that guide robot.

Richie: *Descent 3* is basically *Quake* in a ship. The first *Descent* was *Doom* in a ship.

Prez: Yeah, but you're talking about looking at ceilings and floors in a space ship for God's sake! I thought we were supposed to be in outer space?

Mallo: But you're in a cockpit and you even get to see the stars...



Prez: You could be talking about *Midtown Madness* for all I know! I had the same problem with *Descent 3* as I had with *FreeSpace 2* – I never had a clue what was going on!

Steve: I had that problem with most of these games.

Prez: I had my finger on the trigger constantly and I was doing things inadvertently – then all of a sudden the mission's over.

Mallo: You'd never be chosen to be *The Last Starfighter* – swept away to fight some alien race...

Everyone: (Laughs)

Prez: Oh God, I saw that a few weeks ago – it was terrible.

Steve: *Descent 3* is great – you can play it for two or three hours and find it quite hypnotic. I found that the ship was too big, though. You spend a fair bit of time bumping into the sides. The scale of it seems wrong.

Mallo: The cockpit looks really good. The actual visual

representation of the ship you're flying.

Steve: Oh, I got rid of it straight away... it gets in the way.

Mallo: Makes you bump into walls does it?

Richie: It's easier to get lost in *Descent 3* than in previous versions because of the way they've used the lighting. Some

“It's a *Star Wars* fan's wet dream. I found myself getting the feel of a truly three-dimensional battle”

MALLO LOVES THE 'PADLOCK VIEW' ON X-WING ALLIANCE

tunnels are easy to miss because they're buried in a dark corner somewhere. You sometimes have to fire into the corners to light them up.

Mallo: Or use flares. They are provided. But that is a problem with the game – you end up getting stuck in certain places because you have to search every nook and cranny for an exit.

Steve: Back-tracking can be boring, but that guide bot does come back to find you if you're lost.

Mallo: That said, the control system is quite intuitive. I like the way you can slide left and right, à la *Quake*.

Richie: As I said, *Descent* is just zero-G *Quake*.

Mallo: To give it credit, the control system does work really well. Two or three hours into it and you're zipping about like nobody's business. You do start to feel good about what you're doing, and you do start to hit targets as intended. Getting a bit further – building

your weapons up – to some extent it's very satisfying.

Steve: It's rubbish!

Everyone: (Laughs)

Mallo: You're not being fair, and you're contradicting yourself. Graphically, it's very good...

Prez: No it's not.

Steve: It's a bit blocky.

Richie: The monsters are crap – they look like Maximilian out of *The Black Hole*.

Steve: Now that was one of the worst sci-fi films, ever!

Mallo: *Descent 3* looks a lot better than *Wing Commander: Prophecy*.

Prez: Granted, but that's like asking which dog turd is better...

Steve: Right – when you go outside the thing slows down to a crawl.

Mallo: It didn't on my machine.

Prez: It did on mine.

Mallo: Well, it's not the game's fault that you've got a s**t machine. I've got a ninja machine and it runs alright on that.

Steve: Mine started jerking as soon as there were three or four robots in the room.

Mallo: Martin – come on new boy, you haven't said a word yet. What did you think of it?

Martin: I thought it was too easy. Every time you die you pick up from where you left off.

Steve: Yeah, that's another thing. But at least that means you never stop playing the game until you complete it. Or make yourself stop.

Mallo: You do lose all your weapons if you die. But don't all your weapons and rockets stay floating in space where you died originally?

Steve: Yeah, you can go back and get them – or send the chimp robot to get them for you.



DESCENT 3

Having been around since before the dawn of 3D acceleration, the *Descent* series has had enough time to build a satisfyingly solid legion of fans. This third installment in the series still provides all the thrills and spills of subterranean combat, with a smattering of outdoor environments thrown in for fun.

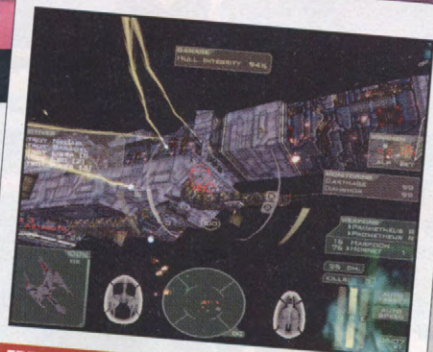
ORIGINAL SCORE	87% PCZ #79
DEVELOPER	Parallax
PUBLISHER	Interplay
PRICE	£34.99

It's easy to get confused as to where you are in *Descent 3*.



Descent 3: not exactly a space sim in the biblical sense.

The battles in *FreeSpace* are truly awesome.



FREESPACE 2

The original *FreeSpace* was a rather pleasant bolt out of the blue, and this visually stunning, highly involving sequel continues that trend. Huge, sprawling space battles weave satisfyingly into a half-decent storyline and an overall sense of the bigger picture prevails. And check out the size of those cruisers!

ORIGINAL SCORE	85%, PCZ #84
DEVELOPER	Volition
PUBLISHER	Interplay
PRICE	£29.99

Prez: Nice explosions – that's what I'll say about it. Blow up a box of crates and things fly everywhere. That's nice. But that's about it.

Mallo: So we're not totally convinced by *Descent 3* then?

Richie: It's a nice little blaster, but it's not strictly a space combat sim. It's simply the next best thing to trapping yourself in a mine shaft.

FREESPACE 2

Richie: *FreeSpace 2* easily has the best interface out of all the games here. Possibly the best graphics. It's got a good storyline...

Steve: Two words:

Battlestar Galactica. All of these games are riddled with it. It's one of the worst films ever made and it's influenced all of these games. I made myself watch that film in preparation for this 'Supertest' – it's absolutely appalling.

Mallo: He's got a point. Four out of five games here have elements based on that film...

Steve: And *Buck Rogers*.

Mallo: *FreeSpace 2*'s got the most keyboard commands out of all the games here.

Richie: Next to *X-Wing Alliance* I don't think it has. But they're all within easy reach and there are only one or two keys that you need to know – especially if you've got a decent joystick.

Steve: Yeah, I'm thick and I managed it.

Richie: And the tutorials pop up every now and then, when you get a new ship.

Mallo: Yeah, the tutorials are great, but I'd have preferred to have crammed them all in at the start, rather than having one every three or four missions.

Martin: I thought *FreeSpace 2* was really good. One of the best things about it is the combat system. And the fact that when you move left and right, you don't

move instantaneously – it takes a certain amount of time to change direction.

Mallo: The combat in *FreeSpace 2* is really easy to get into.

Martin: It's easy, but it depends what you're used to. It's a lot more challenging than something like *WC Prophecy*.

Prez: It's more realistic than a lot of arcadey alternatives.

Mallo: I don't think you can bring realism into it.

Prez: Realism in these games can ruin them – look at what they did with *Frontier: Elite II*.

Martin: In truth, what links all these games together is storyline. Space flight sims rely heavily on storyline. We've had *Wing Commander Vs X-Wing* since the start, and that set a precedent – you didn't want to simply go around blasting other ships... you need a reason to go back to it. So part of the appeal of these games is how good the story is and how well it's brought across.

Mallo: Discounting *X-Wing Alliance*, because it's *Star Wars* and has a head start in this department, *FreeSpace 2* possibly has the best storyline out of all of the games here. It's still bullshit

though – the intro starts off at 'The Great Battle of Deneb' which put me off straight away. Designers rarely seem to come up with believable names...

Steve: Exactly! As soon as I hear that, it's like, forget it.

Prez: *FreeSpace 2* reminds me of that TV show. What's it called?

Space: *Above And Beyond?* Kinda like *Platoon* in space. BBC2 I think.

Steve: Or the Space Channel. Whatever. It sounds awful.

Mallo: The pre-mission briefings are overly 'wordy'. You have to wade through loads of text before you even get to let off a missile in anger.

Prez: You have all these briefings with all these details, but as soon as the missions begin I have no

clue as to what's going on. I'm flying along then suddenly it's, 'Bad guys ahead' – I look up and all my wingmen have flown off into the distance. By the time I get there the enemy is already dead! It's almost as if the game is playing by itself – I didn't feel as though I was taking part.

Martin: If you're flying along and

situations there's always some confusion – you never know exactly what's going on the whole time.

Mallo: Why's it called *FreeSpace* anyway?

Steve: Because it's set in space. And it is free.

Everyone: (Laughs)

Richie: It's irony. Like I said in

"I'm a big Wing Commander fan, but this game managed to destroy the entire series in one swoop"

MARTIN IS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF WING COMMANDER: PROPHECY

the review: once you install it you have *none* on your hard drive. The full install is one-and-a-half Gigs.

Mallo: F**king hell!

Prez: The problem with *FreeSpace* is that the missions are similar to the kind of thing you get in *Wing Commander* – fly to waypoint A; here's a battle; take



there's an enemy fighter behind you, your wingmen do tell you to watch out, which is really great. In most of these games you're being shot from behind and you blow up – no one warns you.

Mallo: In real life combat

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

So what exactly lies ahead for the space genre?

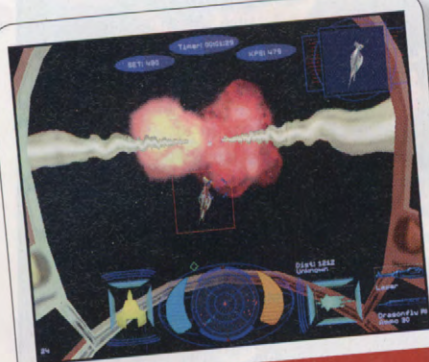
Steve Hill heard American journalists openly whistle in amazement at a recent demonstration of Digital Anvil's forthcoming *Freelancer*. Although that's of no particular interest to us cynical old Brits, Mr Hill's own recollection of the event makes mention of a few 'whoops' made by himself, in such a way that would make you think Chris Roberts and his Anvil crew are on the verge of some marvellous breakthrough in the genre.



It's *Freelancer*...



... and a starlancer.



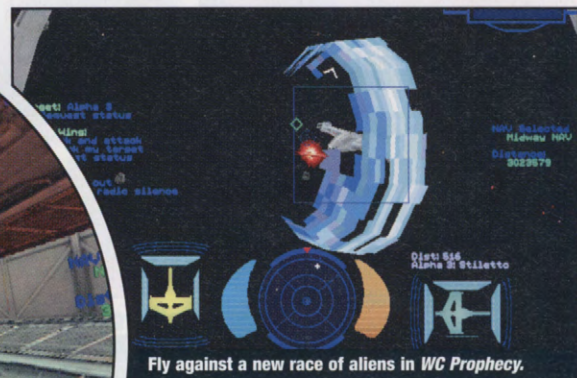
WING COMMANDER: PROPHECY

We couldn't do a space shooter 'Supertest' and not include a *Wing Commander* game. *Wing Commander: Prophecy* is almost two years old now, but its mix of full-motion video and 3D accelerated graphics is still eye-opening. *WC* purists may prefer other episodes, but *Prophecy* is the most advanced.

ORIGINAL SCORE	79%, PCZ #72
DEVELOPER	Origin
PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts
PRICE	£14.99



The take-offs are now done for you, unlike in previous *WC* games.



Fly against a new race of aliens in *WC Prophecy*.



WC Prophecy is the nearest to arcade action out of the games on offer.

part in that; fly back to base...

Richie: Did you actually finish any of the missions?

Prez: Yeah! They don't change much, though.

Mallo: They do. There's an interesting political thing going on between the enemy and one of your generals and that introduced a sort of random, branching element.

Steve: Is that the one where you're this bloke that goes through a star gate, and you think: what the f**k's going on here?!

Then this bloke starts yapping...

Martin: No, that's X.

Steve: Oh, I don't f**king know! They all look the same to me.

Richie: There are three or four points in *FreeSpace 2* where you can actually choose to branch out and go on some sort of special 'secret ops' mission. Another thing is that if you fail a mission five times you get the option to skip it and move onto the next one.

Steve: What's the point in that?

Mallo: The scale of some of the ships in *FreeSpace 2*... They're huge! And the multiple missile

trails are brilliant.

Richie: Ah, but when you get up close to some of the big ships they look a bit crap, but overall the effects are superb. And the AI is good, too.

Prez: Graphically it's superb.

Mallo: The 'star blur', when you move around, is really cool, too.

Martin: The size of the battles in *FreeSpace 2* is awesome. You really get the feeling that you're playing something like *Battlestar Galactica* almost. That is one of the most appealing things about it.

Richie: The missions where you take on these huge 'capital' ships are great. Your objective might be to take out its weapons, so you do that and get the hell out. In

something like *Wing Commander* you actually have to destroy the whole thing before the mission finishes.

Martin: You can re-load your ship mid-battle as well, which is

though, I did feel quite content.

Mallo: It's got the second best music out of all the games here.

Steve: What's the best?

Mallo: *X-Wing Alliance* of course! John Williams. The music in

"Once you do start making money, it seems to come in quickly and there's no challenge"

PREZ'S OBSERVATION OF X - BEYOND THE FRONTIER



FreeSpace 2 is operatic in places, rather than the usual sort of 'dan, dan, da, da, da, dan, dan!' as heard in *WC Prophecy* and the like. It sounds like 'angels singing', I've got written here in my notes.

Steve: You must have been caned when you thought that one up.

Mallo: On the downside though, the f**king install messed-up my desktop!

Steve: And mine. I had a Ray Winstone 'Scum' backdrop, which just f**king disappeared!

Mallo: Ah - mustn't grumble...

WING COMMANDER: PROPHECY

Steve: I couldn't get the f**king thing to work! I tried it on two PCs and they weren't havin' it.

Martin: I'm a big *Wing*

TO INFINITY AND BEYOND...

How many space shooters are there?

Judging by the number of space shooters that have graced our screens thus far you'd have thought the PC had been built solely to indulge our deep-rooted, deep-space fantasies and nothing more. There are *that* many. If *Privateer 2: The Darkening* had worked under Windows 95/98 we might have included it in this 'Supertest', but it didn't, so we didn't. *X-COM Interceptor* is a bit pants

now, as is Gremlin's *Hardwar*. Derek Smart is still trying to get *Battlecruiser 3000AD* right, and is currently wasting his time working on *3020AD*. *Darklight Conflict*? Look at it now. *FreeSpace: Silent Threat*? Still quite good. *G-Police*? *Incoming*? *Lander*? *Rogue Squadron*? They all look nice, and are decent enough for a few days, but all lack the depth and pedigree of the games we chose for the shortlist this month.

something you can't do in any of the others. So you can re-arm, then go back and have another go. If you mess up in something like *Prophecy* you have to go back to the beginning and do the whole thing again.

Prez: I did like the mission editor that comes with *FreeSpace 2*. I spent a good many hours creating huge asteroid fields with big ships going all over the place.

Richie: The only thing wrong with *FreeSpace 2* is that the multiplayer game needs too many players to work, and that you need a fast connection to take advantage of the voice communication feature. Oh, and that the single-player game only takes about three days to complete. After I finished it,



Commander fan, but this game managed to destroy the entire series in one single swoop.

Mallo: You reckon?

Martin: *Wing Commander IV: The Price Of Freedom* was undoubtedly the best of all of them. It had ground missions, space missions – obviously – a fantastic storyline, and it's probably the closest anything's ever come to a proper 'interactive movie' because you actually made the decisions for a change.

Steve: Why the f**k aren't we playing that instead then?

Mallo: *Prophecy* is the latest *Wing Commander* game. It's definitely the most streamlined and it's 3D accelerated. Is that enough for you?

Steve: Oh, get to f**k.

Martin: With *Prophecy* it's almost as if they thought: 'Sod it, we can't be bothered to spend 10 million quid to give you a decent interactive movie, so we're gonna make it mission-based', and the movies are based on the missions you do, and it's just s**t. The AI is dreadful. I put it on the second hardest level and it was still too easy. It just doesn't compare to number four.

Prez: The thing is, around the time of the fourth *Wing Commander* we were saying: 'We hate FMV', so they probably listened to us.

Mallo: Hold on, *Wing Commander Prophecy* is still chock full of FMV. I wouldn't say it's dreadful. There's too much FMV for my

liking, but it's well integrated and the acting's not the worst I've ever seen. It's not *that* bad.

Martin: Yeah, but all the game consists of is – come back after a mission and sit chatting for ages in the bar. Then you go off to do another mission. There's no real story there.

Mallo: It sometimes seems like a one-location soap opera, granted, but if you were stuck in the middle of a war you'd spend as much time in the bar as they do.

Everyone: (Laughs)

Martin: And the new enemy they introduce is... well, completely undeveloped.

Mallo: It felt like it was running too fast on my PC.

Prez: It's an old game.

Martin: And this is the most arcadey out of all the recent *Wing Commanders*, too. If you play *Secret Ops*, which is the 'free' add-on you get with the *Prophecy Gold Pack* and which has no cut scenes, mission after mission, it's the same old stuff. You do realise just how arcadey this game is. Fly against loads of opponents, target them – next waypoint...

Mallo: My God man, don't be so cynical. Most of these games are like that.

Martin: In its favour, some of the big ships are really, really impressive. There's one really good fighter where five smaller fighters combine to make one

really big fighter, which is cool.

Mallo: Like a Transformer?

Martin: Yeah.

Richie: Power Rangers.

Mallo: Sounds like *Star Wing* on the SNES.

Prez: And *Star Fleet*.

Mallo: Yeah, that live action models thing.

Prez: Then *Terrahawks* took over.

Steve: *Terrahawks* was fantastic.

Mallo: Jesus! What was that mad old witch called?

Steve and Richie: Zelda!

Martin: Erm, just getting back to the subject... *Prophecy* is the game that is the easiest to get on with if all you're looking to do is shoot things.

Mallo: It's the game with the sexiest bird in it.

Prez: Yeah, but she's a porn star.

Mallo: I'm not talking about Ginger Lynne Allen. That bird that plays Lt Kasey. I think it's Lt Kasey... Mark Hamill's looking a bit haggard these days, but he's still cool in my book because I met him twice and he remembered me.

Richie: The *Wing Commander* series is dead. Let's face it – it has to be said.

Prez: It always left me feeling cold. *Privateer* was better because that had that *Elite*-style trading element.

Richie: We're not including *Privateer* are we?

Mallo: *Privateer 2* doesn't work

under Windows 95, or 98.

Richie: Doesn't it?

Martin: No, I tried it the other day. You need pure DOS.

Prez: It does on my brother's machine, but it's very fast.

Martin: Has anyone seen the *Wing Commander* movie?

I wanted to see it, but everyone slagged it off and I didn't see it released anywhere in this country.



Mallo: Straight to video.

Richie: When it came out in the States people only went to see it because it was the first film to run with the new *Star Wars* trailer. People went to see the trailer, then went home.

X - BEYOND THE FRONTIER

Richie: If *FreeSpace 2* is *Battlestar Galactica* then *X - Beyond The Frontier* is *Silent Running*.

Mallo: Nah, it's 2001: A Space

Odyssey. Those docking sequences are like, serene, man. Playing *X* can be hypnotic, almost like you've been drugged-up.

Prez: *X* is far more hypnotic than f**king *Descent*.

Steve: Yeah.

Prez: It's a really slow-paced game, but it really does suck.

Richie: Everyone talks about how great *Elite* was and *X - Beyond The Frontier* is exactly the same.

“When you get close to some of the big ships they look a bit crap, but overall the effects are superb”

SAYS RICHIE ABOUT *FreeSpace 2*

When you first played *Elite* it took you six months before you knew what the f**k you were doing.

Mallo: I like that you can set up your own factories and supply routes, and that they actually start making you money while you're away exploring the arse-end of some God-forsaken star system.

Richie: It is difficult to get your head around, though. They left far too much out of the manual.

Prez: But the idea was that you're adrift in the unknown universe and sort of learn as you go.

Mallo: Your main motivation is to make money.

Prez: And that's the



Build factories and watch the money roll in.



You could float in space for hours.

X: BEYOND THE FRONTIER

As German space exploration/combat games go, *X - Beyond The Frontier* is up there with the best. In fact, no, it's PC ZONE's current benchmark. More sedate than many of its rivals, *X* throws you into an unknown universe and challenges you to 'buy' yourself out of it. Yes, you read that right.

ORIGINAL SCORE	90% PCZ #82
DEVELOPER	Egosoft
PUBLISHER	THQ
PRICE	£29.99

Too bad there's only one ship to play.



Quite possibly the longest intro sequence in games today.

← fundamental problem with this game: once you *do* start making money, it seems to come in very quickly and then there's no challenge left in the game. The game is over far too quickly.

Richie: Exploring's really good.

Prez: Yeah, exploring's great...

Richie: And every solar system is, like, bathed in light.

Prez: Yeah, and it's a beautiful game... a lovely game. I've been up until four in the morning on countless occasions, *but* it's too limited once you've got it sussed.

Once you've got some factories going and some money coming in you realise that there's not much else left to do. Once you've completed the missions, and found your way back home – which is pretty easy to do once you've got the cash – the game's over and there's nothing left to it. *X* looks like it has long term appeal, but it doesn't once you've cracked it.

Richie: I've come nowhere near completing it and I've played it for weeks.

Mallo: Me too. Are we playing the same game Prez? I mean, *X* isn't as immediate as something like *FreeSpace 2*, but I think it has more longevity by comparison. And it does have some nice touches, like the 'eye strain' when you apply turbo.

Richie: I like the style of the ships and the space stations and the coloured lighting. And the speech as well... I liked the speech. And the camera angles when you go in... I just think it's really, really, really nice.

Mallo: Those jump gates that take you to another system are

sometimes very hard to find against the blackness of space.

Richie: You use that zoom thing. Have you tried zooming in all the way into the textures?

Mallo: I'd have preferred a bit more space traffic in the game. Maybe motorways in space with loads of ships flying past?

Prez: The game needs more variety. There's an add-on coming out that sounds really good.

Richie: Yeah, *X-Tension*.

Prez: It sounds really good – like they're going to make it a bit more like *Elite*. Independent missions, taxing, doing stuff for people. That should really open it up. And controlling your factories from afar. In *X – Beyond The Frontier* you have to fly to your factory every time you want to change how it operates, but



remote control should do wonders for *X*'s gameplay.

Richie: For some reason I found myself flying around using the keyboard, and in combat using a joystick. I dunno why but I just couldn't fly with a joystick.

Mallo: Flying the ship, especially once you've got that time accelerator, felt really good and intuitive. You're pulling little tricks using turbo when coming in to

land – seeing how fast you can manoeuvre into place without crashing into the docking bay walls.

Richie: The recent patch adds some nice features too. You can now build fighters in your factories and get them to follow you.

Prez: Can you?

Richie: Yeah. And there are about ten different commands you can give them as well. You can even send them to waypoints and stuff.

Prez: I can't wait to amass a large fleet!

Mallo: So you're gonna go back to it then Prez?

Prez: Yep.

Mallo: What about you Martin?

Martin: It's one of those games where you have to be patient.

Mallo: And were you patient?

“I found that the ship was too big, though. You spend a fair bit of time bumping into the sides”

STEVE LIKES DESCENT 3 BUT HAS A BIT OF A SIZE ISSUE

Martin: Yes I was, but it was slow... I nearly gave up on the whole thing. Trundling around slowly, trying to make a few measly extra credits... but once you get past that, it's really immersive and it's quite interesting – probably the most interesting out of all of them – but you have to have serious patience to get to that point.

Mallo: You have to invest so much time into *X*.

Steve: It's been made for

unemployed people hasn't it?

Prez: I read a review in another magazine, but it was obvious that they hadn't played it properly. Whoever reviewed it couldn't be arsed to put some time into it and slagged it off.

Mallo: It was out of order.

Prez: It was unbelievable.

Mallo: So, *X – Beyond The Frontier*, then?

Steve: If I had the time or the patience, again, maybe if I was in prison, I'd possibly play it through to the end. If *CM3* was outlawed...

Mallo: I'm surprised Steve. I thought it'd be a game you'd despise at every level.

Steve: Yeah... you're right! I do.

Everyone: (Laughs)

Steve: No, I can see how – if you had some really strong weed – you could get sucked-in by it.

Richie: Looking back, one of the problems with *X* is you don't earn enough money from something like piracy. Earning money from factories is a bit boring.

Prez: *X* has the pretence of freedom. Hopefully the *X-Tension* pack will make it the best game ever.

Everyone: (Silence)

Prez: If it *does* work the way they say it will.

Mallo: What, best game *ever*!?

Prez: Well, space trading game...

Steve: Of the past few months.

Everyone: (Laughs)

X-WING ALLIANCE

Mallo: I love it. It's great.

Richie: Yeah, when you get it working in hardware that is...

Steve: I couldn't get my 3D card working either.

Mallo: The skirmish mode is brilliant. It's really easy to set up space battles with all your *Star Wars* favourites. You can have TIE Fighters protecting Star Destroyers – the lot. Even the Death Star. In fact, I found a cheat the other day on the Internet that allows you to fly every ship in the game, from Star Destroyers all the way up to the Death Star. Star Destroyers move really, really slowly, but you can still fly them.

Everyone: (Laughs of disbelief)

Prez: The skirmish mode is good. I set up some quite complex situations with different waves of fighters coming in and it was all really well handled.

Mallo: The usual *Star Wars* 'family ethic' prevails in the single-player missions as well, I noticed...

Steve: What, you mean your whole family is slaughtered?

Mallo: No – you get to have sex with your sister... No, no – not really. In this you play a young kid

who's the son of a trader, flying a Millennium Falcon-type thing.

Steve: It didn't feel like proper *Star Wars*. I'd never heard of these people.

Mallo: I thought it felt like proper *Star Wars*.

Prez: Oh, it felt so much like *Star Wars*.

Richie: I don't think it did at all.

Steve: A camp robot as the interface?! Some f**king kid you'd never heard of?!

Prez: It felt more like *Star Wars* than *The Phantom Menace*!

Mallo: Yeah, exactly. Rich, you paid nearly a £1,000 to go and see *Star Wars* in America last year, so you're probably the most qualified to comment on *X-Wing Alliance*'s *Star Wars*-ish-ness.

Richie: This is something that came up in the 'Star Wars Supertest' a few issues back, but they're doing these mission-based space games when there's so much scope to do something, you know, different. More open.

Mallo: But as a game in its own right, *X-Wing Alliance* is a great experience. Not only that, but when you complete the single-player game it unlocks hidden missions from *Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return Of The Jedi*, all of which are brilliant. It's the ultimate *Star Wars* fan's wet dream, and a real incentive to complete the game.

Richie: *X-Wing Alliance* takes a long time to get into. Some of the missions just sent me to sleep.

Prez: I disagree. The missions in the game are excellent. There's one where you have to sneak into an Imperial installation, steal a shuttle and get out of there without being detected. It's a really well-structured storyline, and it's all integral to the storyline.

Mallo: I agree.

Martin: It does take two or three missions to get into...

Mallo: I'd say about five.

Martin: But after that it's gripping stuff.

Prez: Just taking off in the Millennium Falcon, I was going, like: 'Oh s**t – yes!'

Mallo: And you've got the turret as well – you can flip between the cockpit and Luke Skywalker's old proving ground with ease. And the target lock mode thing...

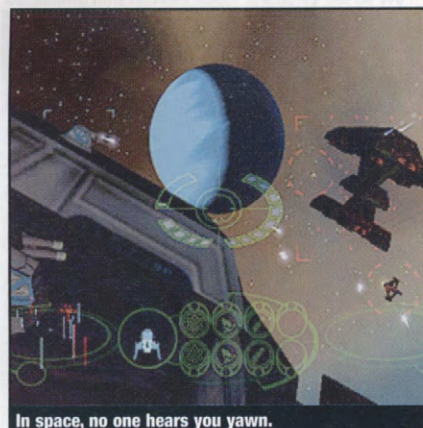
Prez: The padlock view?

Mallo: Yeah. That's brilliant, too. The best flight sims use the same thing – the cockpit moves around you while your target stays centred on screen the whole time. It works really well when you're in combat. I found myself getting the feel of a truly 3D battle.

STAR BORES

Z-Grade Sci-fi tat

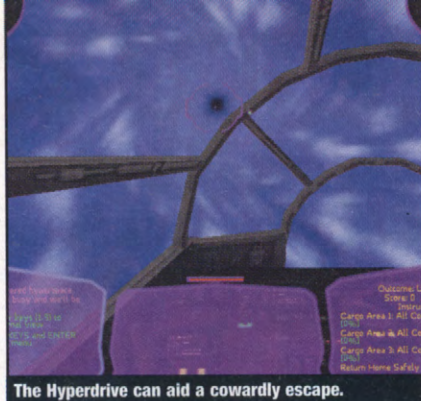
'My God, it's full of stars.' A classic line from Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, not – as you may have at first thought – anything to do with this 'Supertest'. Which is exactly what *Xenocracy* (Grolier) and *Phoenix* (Team 17) have: absolutely nothing to do with this 'Supertest'. The cream of space shooters they are not. Savvy?



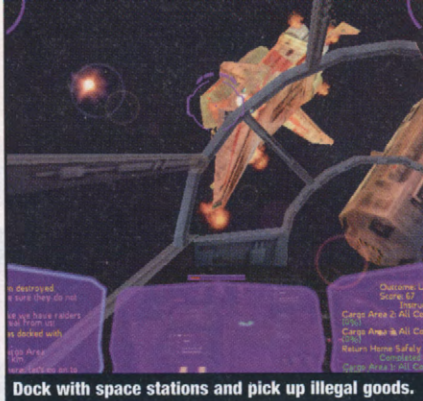
In space, no one hears you yawn.



A space combat classic. Not.



The Hyperdrive can aid a cowardly escape.



Dock with space stations and pick up illegal goods.



Fly an X-Wing and be a rebel.



Martin: It's nice to approach the *Star Wars* universe from a slightly different angle.

Mallo: The new alien race?

Martin: It's not just Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia beating the hell out of the Empire by themselves. It's like a load of people working together to make it happen. You don't see that in the films.

Steve: (Exasperated) But it doesn't exist!

Everyone: (Laughs)

Martin: No, but theoretically you'd like to think it does.

Everyone: (Exasperated laughs)

Martin: They do make reference to Luke Skywalker, which ties it all in.

Steve: Yeah, you hear it about ten times before failing the mission, then you switch it off

and play *Rogue Squadron* because it's a proper *Star Wars* game and it's easy.

Mallo: So you're panning this game and you haven't even bothered to f**king play it?!

Steve: I've seen enough. If it was good it would make me want to play more.

Richie: And if it wasn't *Star Wars* do you think you'd still play it?

Mallo: Imagine the names they would come up with if it wasn't *Star Wars*. Fancy alien names with too many apostrophes and double vowels.

Steve: They should stick with names like Terry and John.

Everyone: (Laughs)

Mallo: That's the problem with a lot of these games...

Steve: Oh, here he goes...

Mallo: The names are reasonably believable in *X* and *X-Wing Alliance*...

Steve: Oh, *X* this, *X* that.

Everyone: (More laughter)

Richie: If you've played all the way up from the original *X-Wing* and you know what you're doing, the missions turn out really well.

Prez: And the music kicks in, there's a battle going on, and you're just there...

Mallo: Man. Yeah, the music's great and it does interact with the

X-WING ALLIANCE

Star Wars, the Millennium Falcon, John Williams' music and Death Stars. What more could a space shooter fan ask for? In the past we've seen *X-Wings Vs TIE Fighters* and *Wookies* using Ewoks as toilet paper, but *X-Wing Alliance* beats the lot of them. And it all ties in nicely with the films.

ORIGINAL SCORE	88% PCZ #77
DEVELOPER	Totally Games
PUBLISHER	LucasArts
PRICE	£34.99

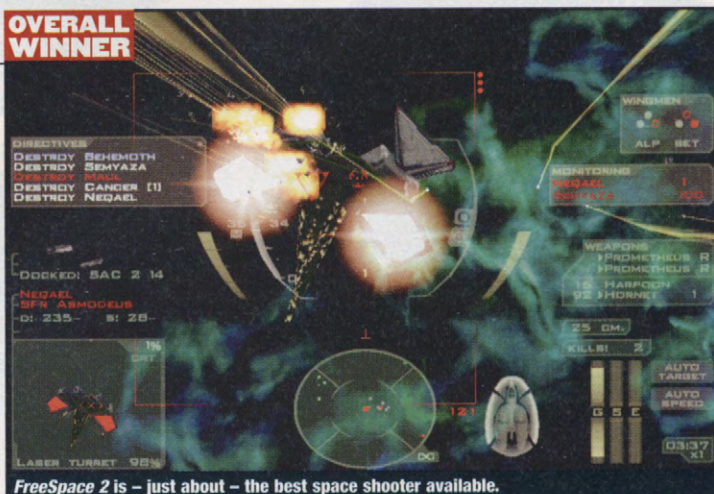
AND THE WINNER IS...

The game with the free-est space

FreeSpace 2 represents a comfortable, and wholly exciting, middle ground between *X-Wing Alliance* and *X-Beyond The Frontier*, although you'd be foolish to get it if you wanted to trade goods and make lots of virtual money, because there isn't any in the game. If you *did* want to concentrate purely on the trading, *X* would be a far better alternative for your attention.

"As space shooters go, *FreeSpace 2* is just the best. The combat is great and the AI is good," says Martin. Mallo agrees: "I really enjoyed it. But I prefer *X-Wing Alliance*."

FreeSpace 2, above and beyond anything else, is something of an assault on the senses on a decent PC – kitted-out with a 3D card, a force feedback joystick and a good set of speakers. "It's very, very close," says Prez, also preferring *X-Wing Alliance* to *FreeSpace 2*, but eventually he gave in for the same reason as everyone else, agreeing that *FreeSpace 2* is the be-all-and-end-all of space combat shoot 'em ups at the moment, and that it will undoubtedly stay that way until someone, somewhere releases something better...



FreeSpace 2 is – just about – the best space shooter available.

play. Quiet tinkly bits when there's not much going, and DAN! DAN! DA, DA, DA, DAN! DAN! when the Empire meet up with you.

Martin: A Star Destroyer comes out of hyperspace next to you and someone's yelling that there are three TIE Fighters on your tail. You're trying to get to the nearest nav beacon and they're closing in on you...

Mallo: You mean a nav boo-ey?

Everyone: (Laughs)

Mallo: Why do American's say boo-ey when it's quite obviously buoy?! Are they all dyslexic? Jesus Christ!

Steve: Calm down!

Mallo: Sorry. [X]

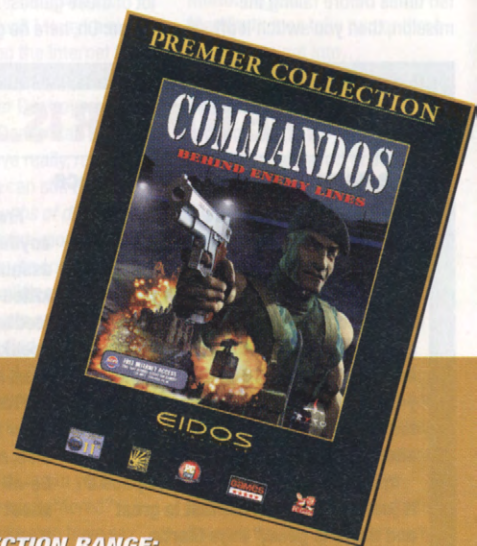
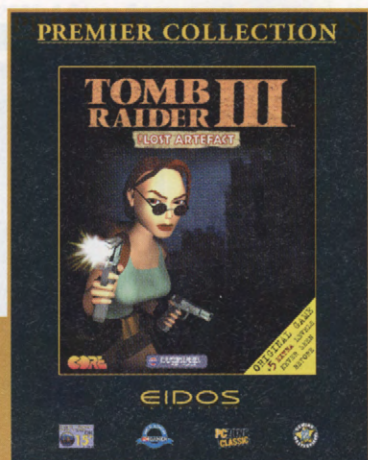
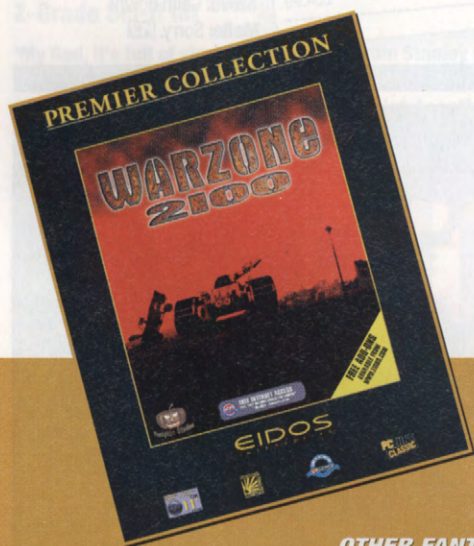
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www.eidos.com

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EIDOS
INTERACTIVE

BUDGET ZONE

This month we have two essential packs and some insignificant bits and pieces. Mark Hill dishes out high praise and vitriolic condemnation in equal measures

★ DOMINATED BY DAN Mark Hill

HALF-LIFE: GENERATIONS

★ £39.99 • Sierra • Out now

TECH SPECS

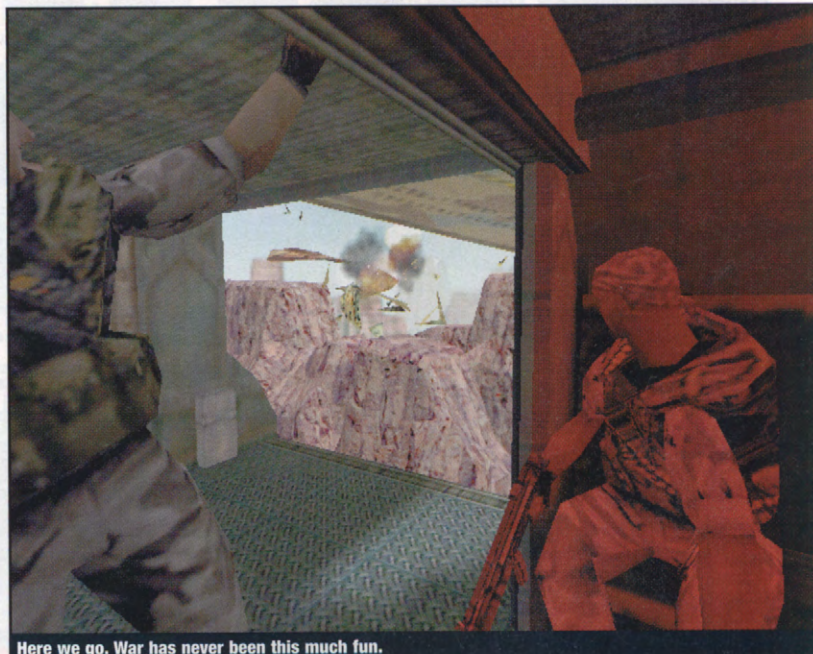
MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P233, a 3D card and a bib for dribbling on

PCZONE CLASSIC

You're probably sick to death of hearing us praise *Half-Life* and ranting on about it being the best game ever, constantly comparing more recent releases to it and making your ears (and your eyes) bleed with our admiration. Alright, so it's got some flaws. The story could be a bit better, the Xen levels are dull and we could all do with less first-person platform jumping. So what? It's still never been bettered. Owning a decent PC and not having your own copy is like having a TV that's only tuned in to Channel 5, and with this new *Generations* pack, there really is no excuse. Bundled together for a measly £35 are the original game, the formidable multiplayer add-on *Team Fortress Classic* and *Opposing Force*. There are just so many 'moments' in *Half-Life*, scenes so damn good you have to play through them over and over again, unexpected events that leave you frozen in amazement. No other game has a higher 'wow' factor. And the moment you start fighting soldiers, rather than aliens, your whole life changes, as they chase you and shoot at you relentlessly. While *OF* doesn't quite live up to its expectations, it still features some of the best moments in the pack, especially against the sneaky, lightning-fast, special black ops. It may not last very long, but it is such an intense experience while it does, that you'll hardly have time to catch your breath. We can only wait and hope that *Voyager: Elite Force* and *Duke Nukem Forever* can set new standards for the single-player FPS. Until then, *Half-Life* remains the Godfather and rules supreme.

PCZVERDICT

95%



Here we go. War has never been this much fun.

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS PACK

★ £34.99 • Take 2 • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233 Memory 32Mb RAM
WE SAY A P266, 64Mb RAM, a 3D card and an ozone-friendly can of insect repellent

PCZONE CLASSIC

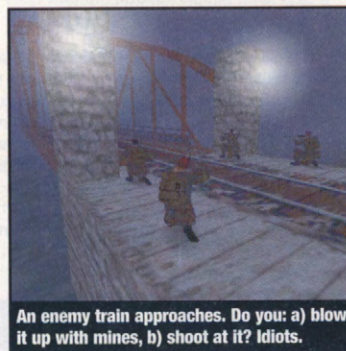
Bringing together the original *Hidden & Dangerous* and the recent *Fight For Freedom* mission disc, this pack is another must-have, especially for any fan of WWII action/strategy and tactical, team-based games.

Having said that, the bug infestation that plagued the original title is well documented, and it is almost a scandal that this release doesn't contain a panacea that cures this diseased epic. When you consider that the nine new missions in the *Fight For Freedom* add-on are just as unhealthy, you seriously have to question the ethics of unleashing this pack on the poor game-buying community. It is a testament to the game's outstanding quality that so much of it still manages to shine through, and it still deserves the accolade of being one of the best games of 1999. Why? Because nothing has ever come as close to recreating the childish thrill of 'playing at war', while at the same time retaining enough realism to leave the adult suspended in disbelief. You can enjoy the tremendous satisfaction of zooming in to some unsuspecting Nazi soldier's head, squeezing the trigger, seeing the spurt of blood and hearing the distant thud of his body hitting the ground without feeling sick or guilty that he might be a 16-year-old drafted into a cruel, horrible war against his will. Until the game freezes, one of your soldiers

starts floating through the air for no apparent reason or falls down dead as if struck by a curse. Playing *Hidden & Dangerous* is akin to watching *Citizen Kane* on a faulty video, frustrating but still an original masterpiece.

PCZVERDICT

91%



An enemy train approaches. Do you: a) blow it up with mines, b) shoot at it? Idiots.



Another victim of the fatal *Hidden & Dangerous* bug. Vaccinate yourself now.

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TECH SPECS

Runs like a dream on almost any machine

PCZONE
RECOMMENDED

Another rarity: a four-year-old racing game that still stands up against today's batch of drivers. The graphics don't look that dated (3D acceleration has been added) and the cars feel just right, if you enjoy bouncing off walls and not having to brake at the precise critical moment the track requires you to. A simple, fast and enjoyable rally-ish experience for all you arcaders. There are three modes of play (arcade, championship and time attack – as well as a multiplayer option) and six pixelatingly beautiful tracks. An essential mini-purchase.

PCZVERDICT

81%



It might be four years old, but it still does the trick.



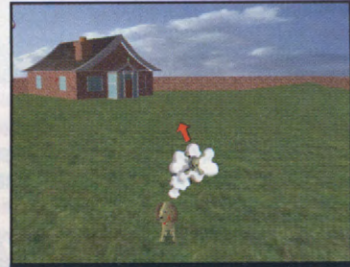
Andy about to be eaten by a plant. Yes!



Jump in, George. Do the world a favour.



A bit steep for an old add-on, isn't it?



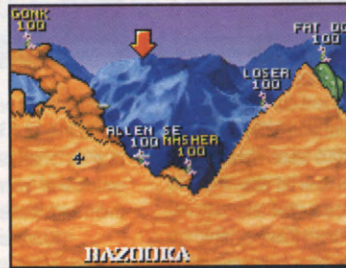
Even the dog gets suicidal after a while.



Prepare to be very, very frustrated.



"Not if you were the last man on earth."



How will he worm his way out of this?



Oh, cute kitten. Now get the dog to eat it.

HEART OF DARKNESS

★ £12.99 • Infogrames • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor 486DX2 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A box of Valium

It took five years to make *Heart of Darkness*, and when you play the game you can see why. The incredible 3D graphics, the immersive story, the rich and varied gameplay. Actually, forget all that, they must have spent half a decade making the almost *Toy Story*-quality intro, then made the game in the last four days. This is like *Abe's Odyssey*, only infinitely more frustrating and repetitive. If you've ever had to read Joseph Conrad's eponymous book, you will understand the excruciating torment that dwindles away your very will to live. After watching cute little Andy fall down a crack in the scenery over and over again, you'll just want to rip his bloody dark little heart out and stick it right up his backside.

PCZVERDICT

27%

BROKEN SWORD 2: THE SMOKING MIRROR

★ £4.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** Whatever

The first *Broken Sword* was an abomination of an adventure game. Not only were the puzzles uninspiring, its portrayal of Paris and Europe irritating, and the pseudo-literary style of the narrative nauseating, it featured the biggest pain ever to star in a game: George Stobbard. And guess what? He's back. This time he's in South America, investigating a cult and making everybody's life a misery. While the overall game is quite polished (for a fiver anyway) and there aren't as many annoying accents, the puzzles are just as simple and the style just as unpalatable. As for the plot, if it doesn't involve the slow and painful ritual sacrifice of George, we're not interested. The fact that there wasn't a third one almost makes us grateful adventure games have died out.

PCZVERDICT

34%

WORMS REINFORCEMENTS

★ £4.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor 486 Memory 8Mb RAM **WE SAY** Consult your pharmacist for the relevant intestinal medication

This has got to be a first in budget releases: an add-on pack for a five-year-old game, without the original game. Presumably this is directed at all the people who bought the original *Worms* for a fiver. But surely if that's the case, then *Reinforcements* should have cost a couple of quid. As it is, the CD doesn't even say that you need the first game to play it, and you'll only find out in the installation process. If you must indulge in some maggoty carnage (after all, nothing beats it when playing against friends), we suggest you look out for *Worms 2* or, even better, *Worms Armageddon*, the latest and most polished of the lot.

PCZVERDICT

25%

3D PETS

★ £4.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor 486 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A small child or a sniper rifle

There is something quite sinister and disturbing about cyber pets, or at least about the people who enjoy them. The worst thing about having a real pet is having to feed it, take it for walks and clean up after it makes a mess, which is what you spend all your time doing in *PC Pup* and *Splat The Cat!* Oh, you can also bounce a ball and throw gasping fish convulsing in the throes of death, but not much else. The feline version is much better, both graphically and options-wise, by virtue of being newer, although why your pets have to hatch from an egg instead of being torn from a mass of blood and placenta, we'll never know. We've got better things to do with our time, even if you do get to play *Connect 4* with your pussy.

PCZVERDICT

30%

FEEDBACK

This month we're going to let you talk about the games that really matter at the moment: *Quake III*, *Unreal Tournament* and *Planescape: Torment*.

Mark Hill arbitrates the discussion

IT'S YOUR SHOUT!

Feedback is here to offer you, the player, a platform to voice your opinions on any of the games reviewed in *PC ZONE* over the last three months. Whether you want to sing a game's praises or simply give it a verbal beating, we want to hear from you. Remember to keep your comments between 50 and 150 words and include your name, address and age.

WRITE TO Feedback, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

E-MAIL Alternatively, e-mail them to us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with 'Feedback' in the subject line.

QUAKE III VS UNREAL TOURNAMENT

Unreal Tournament
REVIEWED Issue 81, October
SCORE 90%

What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC "Unreal Tournament is a milestone. It proves that a bot-packed multiplayer-only game works."

Quake III
REVIEWED Issue 86, February
SCORE 89%

What we thought

PCZONE RECOMMENDED "A vital purchase and the fastest

game money can buy."

What you think

★ "I just wanted to write to let you know how bang on your review and subsequent comments on *Quake III* and *Unreal Tournament* in your Feb 2000 issue were. At Christmas I took up your Gameplay.com offer and purchased both these games. I finally got *QIII* working and, as stated in your review, as a deathmatch game it is unsurpassed, with the launch pads working well and the frenetic gameplay a godsend. I have stopped playing *UT* at the moment,



Quake III stands around confused as *UT* runs away with the flag.

but that is not because it's a bad game, in fact, it is a brilliant game at what it has set out to do. In conclusion (your conclusion) buy them both and be happy!"

Jonathan Kidsley, via email

★ "Following your review of *UT*, I went out to buy it. I am a staunch *Quake* fan and defecting made me feel dirty, but bugger me with a red-hot poker if it isn't death-matching nirvana. The levels are varied, imaginative and well

planned; the graphics are beautiful, the weapons rock, the dialogue between players/bots is spot on but, most importantly, the AI of the bots is unparalleled in FPS (or any other) games.

I love playing multiplayer *QII*, *Half-Life*, *TFC* and *AvP*, but *UT* adds a whole new dimension. Now I can deathmatch (or any of the variants) to my heart's content without suffering the ills of latency, mismatched competitors and, most importantly, lining the pockets of those fat cats at British Telecom. For totally immersive gameplay, *UT* is unbeatable. I pity the die-hard *Quake* fans who have trouble keeping up with the progress that *UT* has thrust upon us!"

Irfan Shaffi, London

★ "How can there be a difference of views of which first-person shooter is the best, when *Unreal Tournament* is the clear winner? With its different modes of play, superior selection of weaponry, great arenas and excellent graphics, I don't think *Quake III* should be marked within ten per cent of the former game."

Wes Simmonds, via email

★ "Having completed almost every 3D shooter ever made, I have to praise the makers of *Unreal Tournament* for beating id

at its own game. *Quake III* lacks the precision of *UT* and feels like a chunky cartoon – the graphics are superb on a high spec machine but that doesn't compensate for the gameplay. If you're going to buy one or the other don't even consider *Quake III*."

Stephen Stovold, Carshalton

★ "I bought *UT* after having it recommended by a friend, and, being a big fan of deathmatching and CTF, I found it fairly disappointing and unbalanced towards one team or another. Also bots, even on your own team, have a tendency to lob a Translocator at your feet, telefragging you while you camp. The weapon balance isn't great, as the ASMD Core, despite being fairly hard to use online due to lag, doesn't do much damage, the Flak Cannon is utter shite and the Redeemer is just a jumped up Rocket Launcher. *UT* isn't a bad game, it just has loads of annoying 'issues' which annoy and frustrate."

James Thorburn, via email

Comment

The balance of opinion seems to be permanently on the side of *Unreal Tournament*, except for the odd critic such as Mr Thorburn. We've already made our position clear: we think *UT*



The fire in the *Quake III* vs *UT* deathmatch seems to be going strictly one way.

is a better game overall, but that doesn't stop us from playing *Quake III* deathmatch almost as much. Like Jonathan says, buy them both if you can afford it.

PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

REVIEWED Issue 86, February

SCORE 87%

What we thought

"Without a doubt, this is the best true role-playing game on PC to date."

What you think

★ "It is much better than *Baldur's Gate*. At last we are starting to see games with a decent narrative."

Elench, via email

★ "Planescape: Torment is an excellent game. It doesn't give you the same amount of freedom in developing your starting character as *Baldur's Gate* did, but it has a much more structured story which drags you in right from the start. And, there are no big empty spaces to explore and get bored with like there were in *Baldur's Gate*."

Darryl McAveney, via email

★ "It's nice to finally be rewarded for role-playing in a role-playing game. You get experience for talking to people and solving riddles, rather than just butchering whole towns. The amount of talking can get quite tiresome, but this is a step in the right direction."

Harvey, via email

★ "I can't believe you gave it a mere 87 per cent, COME ON. The whole review is right on the knickers: the game is atmospheric, has unparalleled graphics and has the best story known to man. In the entire review I can't find anything negative and still you don't reward it with a Classic, damn you. And don't even try telling me that *Planescape* brings nothing new to the RPG genre, it turns the classic RPG around and still manages to maintain the interest of classic RPG players."

Maarten Gerritzen, Rotterdam

★ "I haven't been immersed this much in an RPG since I used to read roll-your-own dice books. The dialogue, the descriptions, the character development, not to mention the story, are all of such divine quality I just can't stop playing it. I've even put off playing another season of *Championship Manager* until I complete it. Knowing that *Neverwinter Nights* and *Baldur's Gate 2* are on their way makes life worth living."

Sam Fischer, Manchester



Some of the glitches mentioned by Bubba Az are fixed by the patch

★ "A great game, but I don't think it quite beats *Baldur's Gate*. The setting is too strange, there's far too much dialogue and there's something about traditional AD&D that appeals to more people. Also there's not as much freedom to do what you want or to choose who your character is going to be at the start of the game."

Stephen Breeds, Leeds

★ "Come on PCZ, I know you've changed your scoring system to be a lot harsher, but surely *Planescape: Torment* is worthy of being a Classic. The review said it was the best RPG to date, so how come it only gets 87 per cent? This game wipes the floor with everything else I've played recently (and not so recently) and I think it deserves to be at least 90 per cent."

Anthony Temple, London

★ I was intrigued by the review of *Planescape: Torment*, which appeared to be based totally on the (admittedly effective) eye-candy. Yes, the spell casting looks fantastic, then there's the... well,

of spontaneity – *PT*'s quests are rigidly fixed into the framework of the overall storyline – if you miss just one quest, you can seriously screw things up for yourself later. Is *PT* a more balanced game?

"Come on PCZ, I know you've changed your scoring system to be a lot harsher, but surely *PT* is worthy of being a Classic"

ANTHONY TEMPLE, LONDON

the... er. Well, that's about it really.

Storyline better than *Baldur's Gate*? No, not exactly. More integrated gameplay than *BG*? Definitely not. *BG* far more successfully integrated the questing/hack 'n' slash/experience point earning into the overall plot. *BG* offered far more scope for 'going off to explore', along with some serious moments

Again, 'fraid not. *BG* offers far more NPC's, interspersed at regular intervals, who have the opportunity to join your party. Overall, *PT* could quite easily be played as a single-player character.

Among the other annoying glitches are Grace's automatic healing spell and the disappearance of the 'battle'

narrative. So, better than *BG*, as the review stated? No. Given *BG* at 85 per cent, I think 80 per cent would have been much fairer. So, why then, I asked myself, did the reviewer rave so highly? I smell a cranium rat.

Bubba Az, via email

Comment

We can tell you that we've had raging arguments over this one. A lot of people in the office think it should be a Classic, others disagree. At the end of the day, *Planescape* will go down in history and be fondly remembered as a truly magnificent game, alongside the likes of *Ultima VII*, and if you have any interest in RPGs whatsoever, it is an essential purchase. If you take a look in the Top 100 at the games we've been playing recently (see page 140), you'll see its name cropping up regularly. And we can't imagine anything toppling it from the second position in the RPG list. It may not seem fair to compare it to *System Shock 2* (for all its innovations and excellence, *Planescape* is a much more traditional role-playing game), but categories are a necessary evil. As for Bubba Az's criticism, all we can say is that you're wrong. The story is fantastic and extremely well told. If the trade off is a slightly more rigid structure, so be it. We can't think of any game that gives the player more freedom while giving a clear goal. We'd go as far to say that everybody who plays *Planescape*, plays a different game. Buy it, play it and cherish it forever. PCZ



Planescape's story is a masterpiece where every cog fits.

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GANGSTER.co.uk
GHOSTBUSTERS.co.uk
HISTORIANS.co.uk
HORTICULTURISTS.net
JEDIKNIGHTS.co.uk
JEDIMASTERS.co.uk
LOAFERS.co.uk
PAGE3GIRLS.net
REFEREES.co.uk
REPORTERS.co.uk
SCHOOLTEACHERS.co.uk
SEAMEN.co.uk
SECRETAGENTS.co.uk
SHOPKEEPERS.co.uk
SPIVS.com
STUNTMEN.co.uk
STYLISTS.co.uk
TERMINATORS.co.uk
THECIA.co.uk
THEFBI.co.uk
THEFEDS.co.uk
THEKGB.co.uk
THEPRESS.co.uk
THERAF.co.uk
THESAS.co.uk
UKARTISTS.com
UKBUILDER.com
UKCHEFS.com
UKCOMEDIANS.com
UKDEEJAYS.com
UKDESIGNERS.com
UKDIRECTORS.net
UKENTERTAINERS.com
UKLANDLORDS.com
UKMODELS.com
UKNURSES.com
UKPHOTOGRAPHERS.com
UKPORNSTARS.net
UKROYALTY.com
UKSINGERS.com
UKTRADESMENT.com
UKTRAINERS.com
UKTUTORs.co.uk
UKVET.net
UKWRITERS.net
WIDEBOYS.co.uk

Places

3DRDOCK.co.uk
BFPO.co.uk
DEEPSACES.co.uk
ENGLISHHOME.net
FAMILYHOME.co.uk
IRISHHOME.net
LOVENEST.co.uk
MARIOWORLD.co.uk
MYEMAILADDRESS.co.uk
OURFLAT.co.uk
ROVERSRETURN.com
SCOTSHOME.net
THEBATCAVE.co.uk
THEMOON.co.uk
TOONTOWN.co.uk
WELSHHOME.net

Short

CP2.com
TEKUP.com
UK2K.com
UK6.net
UKART.com
UKBIG.com
UKBOP.com
UKFUN.com
UKGO.com
UKHOT.com
UKHQ.co.uk
UKKID.com
UKME.com
UKPALS.com
UKPC.net
UKPET.com
UKPUB.net

Fame & TV

BARTFANS.co.uk
BECKHAMFANS.co.uk
BOND007.co.uk
BRADFANS.com
DIANAFANS.com
FRIENDSFANS.com
ONLYFOOLS.com
SKYWALKERS.org
SOAPFANS.net
SOUTHPAKPARTYERS.co.uk
TREKKIES.org
XFILEFANS.com

Very

VERBROKE.co.uk
VERYBUSY.co.uk
VERYCHEAP.co.uk
VERYCLODDY.co.uk
VERYCUTE.co.uk
VERYDRUNK.co.uk
VERYFAT.co.uk
VERYFRIENDLY.co.uk
VERYFUNNY.co.uk
VERYHAPPY.co.uk
VERYLOVING.co.uk
VERYNICHE.co.uk
VERYSEXY.co.uk
VERYSORRY.co.uk
VERYSPECIAL.co.uk

Note: There may be a short delay before some of these domains go live at Freeola.

To connect go to **FREEOLA.COM** and register. Full instructions on screen. No CD needed. Or set your modem to dial **0845 200 3289** and use ID = **FREEOLA** and PASSWORD = **FREEOLA**

Why try Freeola?

Freeola can be used for internet access or for e-mail or for web sites, or all three.

- ✓ No charges and no payment details, it's FREE.
- ✓ Full compatibility up to 128K ISDN.
- ✓ Free unlimited worldwide internet access.
- ✓ Top speed connection first time every time.
- ✓ Just your own LOCAL call charges.
- ✓ Free UNLIMITED e-mail addresses from Freeola's unrivalled choice of 1000 Classemail domain names (these remain our property).
- ✓ Or register a unique domain at Getdotted.com
- ✓ New control panel for almost instant e-mail and web site settings. Change as often as you like.
- ✓ Free virus and spam detection & proxy server.
- ✓ Free off-site back-up on our servers.
- ✓ Free UNLIMITED web space with UNLIMITED bandwidth at any Freeola Classemail address, or at any address registered at Getdotted.com, or at your own existing domain name.

- ✓ Free domain hosting. Move your site to us.
- ✓ Free SSI gives news feeds and games charts etc to spice up your web site.
- ✓ Free web site promotion at Freeola.com.
- ✓ Free e-mail to fax and fax to e-mail. Send e-mail to fax or receive your e-mail on your fax.
- ✓ Free small ads with UKclassified.com.
- ✓ Free communities for like-minded fans.
- ✓ Free £5000 football fantasy (FBfantasy.com)
- ✓ £10000 F1fantasy.com. 18 PlayStation 2's to win!
- ✓ Free games news, reviews and video clips plus exclusive offers to Special Reserve members.
- ✓ Free multi-user games on closed circuits.
- ✓ e.g. Quake 1 & 2, Half-Life, Sin and Tribes.
- ✓ Plus more soon on a dozen super servers.
- ✓ Find them at <http://Multiusergames.com>
- ✓ Precise search facilities at Freeola.com home.
- ✓ Free News, Sport and Financial information in conjunction with ThisisLondon, Soccernet and ThisisMoney at Freeola.com home.
- ✓ Free internet guide at UKbig.com.
- ✓ Free CD (PC/Mac) and starter guide on request

Set up is easy and no CD is necessary. Simply register at Freeola.com and follow the instructions given. Or set your modem to:

0845 200 3289

Test Password = FREEOLA and User = FREEOLA
A browser is required, such as Internet Explorer, which is part of Windows 98, or Netscape Navigator, which is a free download from Netscape.com.

Freeola is 100% sound, stable and secure!

Freeola is part of the Special Reserve Discount Network and is available FREE to all UK residents. For further information and/or a CD for PC or Mac please phone Special Reserve on 01279 321 321.

Special Reserve is a member of Nominet (UK) and a Premier Partner of Network Solutions (USA). We've been trading on the internet since internet trading began and we expect to bring you

The best internet service in the World

HOW TO...

SHOP ONLINE

'Buy over the Net!' We've all had that message shoved down our necks by the media and Net geeks over the past few months. But how do you actually go about doing it? And is it really worth it? Read on and find out...

✱ WRITER Adam Phillips

Online shopping eh? The hype has been unbelievable. If you earn a penny for every time you'd seen an advert or news item featuring an exclamation mark after the words 'Buy Online', you'd have enough money to buy Netscape and rent a condo next to Bill Gates' with a bit of spare change in your pocket.

While some of you have probably been buying computer games, DVDs and CDs over the Net for donkey's years now, there are still those of us who are a tad wary – mainly due to the seemingly fallible technology involved along with the fact that anything that has been hyped so much instantly makes the sceptical among us very suspicious.

The best way to cut through an overdose of hype though, is to take a good look at some hard facts. For instance, a survey carried out by consumer magazine *Which?* Online showed e-commerce is growing in popularity. The consumer magazine approached almost 2,000 households and found that one person in ten has made a purchase online.

OK, fair enough, but how did these cutting edge online shoppers feel about their 'Buy Online!' experience? Only three per cent said the service they received was worse than the service they got from high street stores, while 58 per cent said it was better. Infact, of those who'd bought over the Net in the build-up to Christmas, 87 per cent said they expect to do so again.

So it seems the general opinion from online shoppers is to push past the exclamation marks and give it a go. Yes, there are savings to be made if you look hard enough. And you can pretty much source anything online. Better still, you won't have to hold a conversation with some idiot at a computer store who obviously doesn't know what on earth he's talking about. Shopping online is also a lot more convenient than traipsing around a grotty shopping precinct on a wind-swept, rain-soaked Saturday afternoon.

So, with all the above advantages, where should you start if you're serious about taking the 'Buy Online!' plunge? Read on...

WHERE TO BUY...

PC ZONE offers an inside view on the perils and pitfalls of shopping on the Internet and in newsgroups...

BUYING ON THE WEB

When we asked seasoned online shoppers for their advice to someone considering buying over the Internet, one point kept being raised – compare, compare and... compare! You may find a great deal on that piece of hardware you've been lusting after for the last six months, but be sure to check out as many sites and their prices as possible before taking the plunge.

"Even the sites that usually have the lowest prices are regularly undersold by someone else for some items," said one experienced online shopper. He added: "If you know the exact item you want, enter the name (in quotes) into a search engine (ie Alta Vista). Make sure you select the option in the search engine to filter the search using all the words – the AND option is in most search engines 'advanced search' settings. This should give a list of sites where the item can be purchased."

For the online shopping newbies among you, here are some other useful pointers to bear in mind:

- ✱ Talk to someone who has already shopped on the Internet. It will offer you some reassurance before making your first transaction.
- ✱ Go to a site that has a good name. Don't start with a small operation in a far-off country. Also try and locate an

actual real world address for the seller.

- ✱ Check that the padlock symbol in your browser is closed. This means that the site is secure, which makes it a great deal safer to tap in your credit card details.
- ✱ Print out details of everything you do. These can be used as evidence if anything goes wrong. Also check the company's delivery and return policies.
- ✱ Sometimes you will be forced to buy from abroad, simply because no one in the UK offers the product you're after or offers the goods at a similarly competitive price. Unfortunately, there are more risks involved, including the hassle you'll go through if the goods don't arrive or the potential cost if you have to return something faulty. Again, where possible, deal with large companies with an established name – they have their reputations to protect.
- ✱ When buying abroad, keep an eye out for hidden costs. There will be a VAT charge and you may have to pay import duty, plus a delivery charge on top of that. Some unscrupulous traders don't list these kinds of charges up front (or even at all) on their websites – so be wary. Or you could end up buying something abroad which would have actually been cheaper to buy in your local store...

With so many sites screaming for your wallet's attention online, it can

be difficult working out which are the best. The following addresses should help you get started...

GAMES

Sick of paying for what you feel is over-priced software? Check out the following websites for some decent reductions.

Special Reserve

<http://specialreserve.net/>



Gameplay

www.gameplay.com



Jakarta

www.jakarta.co.uk



COMPUTER HARDWARE

Graphics cards? Hard drives? Monitors? Some totally obscure piece of equipment that absolutely no one on the high street has ever heard of? This is where the Internet really comes to the fore – if the hardware does actually exist, you can pretty much guarantee you'll find it online. Check out the following sites...

Insight

www.insight.com/cgi-bin/bp/uk/uk_home.html



Power Computing

www.powercomputing.co.uk







WHERE TO BUY...

Head straight to the best sites around for some great online deals

Overclockers

www.overclockers.co.uk



M² Online

www.msquared.co.uk



Dabs Direct

www.dabs.com



Scan

www.scan.co.uk



Flibble

www.flibble.demon.co.uk



AUCTIONS

It is more risky than buying from a website, but you can pick up some great second-hand deals.

eBay UK

www.ebay.co.uk



QXL

www.qxl.co.uk



eBid

www.ebid.co.uk



MUSIC, DVD & VIDEOS

Cult movies. Cheap videos. Cut-price CDs. They're all in abundance online...

Streets Online

www.infront.co.uk/index.jhtml



Reel.com

www.reel.com



Blackstar

www.blackstar.co.uk



Boxman

www.boxman.co.uk



HMV

www.hmv.co.uk



BOOKS

Looking for a hard-to-find book? Or perhaps a game guide that never made it to these shores? With the likes of Amazon, you should be able to get your hands on most titles at a competitive price.

BOL

www.bol.com



Amazon

www.amazon.co.uk



BUYING ON THE NEWSGROUPS

It can land you in a world of hurt. The newsgroups may offer up some of the best bargains and one-offs imaginable, but at a steep price – you've basically got no comeback whatsoever. If you get ripped off, you can pretty much forget ever seeing your cash again or taking the bent dealer to court – the UK's Sales Of Goods Act doesn't apply to private sales.

Indeed, *Which? Online* says you should only buy in the newsgroups if you can't find that elusive piece of kit

NOTHING'S PERFECT

Shopping online might be cheaper, but what about the service?

While *Which? Online's* survey found that most UK punters were happy with their online purchasing, there are rumbles of disquiet from elsewhere. A recent survey carried out by Jupiter Communications, a

leading provider of Internet commerce research, has revealed that the online customer services offered by many UK and European websites are severely off-the-mark. They found that 30 per cent of commercial sites didn't bother replying to emails, while 12 per cent didn't even have an email contact address. Of those who did have one, the survey found that traditional high street retailers with online outlets were the worst for customer service – 69 per cent of them took four or more days

to reply to an email enquiry, while the remaining 31 per cent did get back to customers within three days. Online only stores fared better, with 50 per cent of them getting in touch within the three day 'limit'. The best traders were the financial websites – 70 per cent of whom responded in 24 hours. It's disheartening stuff especially if you bear in mind that Jupiter Communications reckon that by 2003, 11 per cent of Europe's population will be buying online and spending an estimated £11.3 billion in the process.

With that kind of money at stake, online businesses simply can't afford to offer a second-

rate service. If they persist in doing so, punters will simply take their business elsewhere.

JUPITER COMMUNICATIONS
www.jup.com

Online shopping is booming, but Jupiter discovered there are still many questions about UK and European customer service.



Just some of the high street stores that are trading on the Net.

PC ZONE'S SHOPPING GUIDE

anywhere else and you're desperate for it. One online shopper, Craig Mayberry, goes even further and says: "I would never even consider buying anything from anyone on a newsgroup for any reason. Period. You have no idea who they are and there is no way of checking them out. I've heard of many people getting burnt by shopping or trading on the newsgroups. Scams are prevalent."

But it's not all doom and gloom – if you have come across a product that you simply must have, there is a way to make checks on the person making the sale. The best method is to check out the word of mouth on the seller. Scuttle along to www.deja.com and enter their name/email address/company name – see if they've sold stuff in the past in the newsgroups, and more importantly, if anyone has been bad mouthing them. If so, give them a wide berth.

Being able to name and shame an individual in the newsgroups to all and sundry can pay off. One PC ZONE reader (who wishes to remain anonymous) told us about a recent incident on a UK newsgroup. "I'd ordered a piece of hardware from someone," he explained. "Two weeks passed and nothing. I sent emails complaining but still – zilch."

"I got so pissed off that I posted to the newsgroup in question, saying that people should avoid the guy because he wasn't delivering and therefore couldn't be trusted. Surprisingly, other people came forward saying that they were still waiting for goods from him as well – basically, the guy's reputation was massacred overnight. The newsgroups give you that power. Thankfully, in the end, the bloke in question posted an apology saying that he was sorry about all the delays – he was in the middle of

his exams! And I got my order a couple of days later."

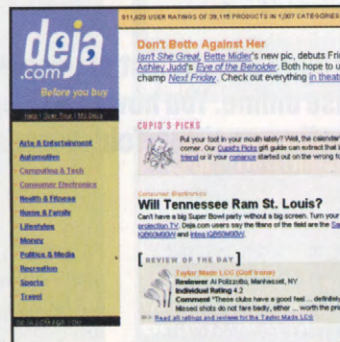
While the above is not the ideal solution, for the brave punters among you, it should offer some peace of mind before heading out into the following newsgroups...



A word of warning from experienced online shopper, Craig Mayberry: "I have heard of many people getting burned by shopping or trading on the newsgroups."



This is just a sample screenshot from comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.marketplace – new offers pop up every day.



If you want to find out if someone has a bad reputation online, go to www.deja.com and do a search on their name or email address.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Can buying online save you cash? PC ZONE hit the high street and the 'information superhighway' to find out...

PRODUCT	WEB PRICE	HIGH STREET
Half-Life: Opposing Force	£17.99 (Gameplay)***	£19.99 (GAME)
Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation	£24.99 (Gameplay)***	£34.99 (GAME)
Quake III Arena	£25.99 (Gameplay)***	£29.99 (GAME)
Microsoft PC Wheel	£86.94 (Insight)**	£99.99 (PC World)
SideWinder Force Feedback		
Sound Blaster Live! Player 1024	£56.39 (Insight)**	£69.99 (EB*)
Hewlett-Packard Deskjet 970c	£245.57 (Dabs)	£279 (PC World)

* Prices correct at the time of going to press. *Electronic Boutique **Free delivery 2-3 days ***Free delivery

NEWSGROUPS

uk.comp.misc
uk.games.misc
uk.adverts.computer
uk.adverts.other
comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.marketplace
misc.forsale.computers.pc-specific.motherboards
misc.forsale.computers.memory
misc.forsale.computers.discussion
misc.forsale.computers.net-hardware
misc.forsale.computers.modems
misc.forsale.computers.monitors
misc.forsale.computers.pc-specific.misc
misc.forsale.computers.pc-specific.audio
misc.forsale.computers.pc-specific.cards.misc
misc.forsale.computers.pc-specific.cards.video
misc.forsale.computers.pc-specific.portables
misc.forsale.computers.pc-specific.software
misc.forsale.computers.pc-specific.systems
misc.forsale.computers.printers
misc.forsale.computers.storage

'SHOW ME THE MONEY!'

How should you pay for goods bought online?

Crunch time. The exchanging of cash for goods. This is when your average newbie starts to feel a tad nervous. All those stories about online fraud creep into your mind. You imagine a hacker waiting to pounce on your card details, or worse still that the company you're sending them to is not who it says it is, but is actually a fat bloke called Hank sitting in his bedroom in Ohio, fleeing people of their cash.

For peace of mind, PC ZONE recommends you use a credit card for all online transactions. And, if you believe a seller has breached the contract or misrepresented themselves you can make a claim to the credit card company. There is a catch though, this only applies to goods or services costing in excess of £100.

So, we'd recommend that you leave your Switch card in your wallet if at all possible.

UK'S BIGGEST & BEST VALUE SERVICE

CHEATS & TIPS FOR OVER 3000 GAMES
PSX, DC, N64, PC & GBC

CHEATS UNLIMITED

PC CHEATS & TIPS

A SIMPLE CALL AND YOU'VE GOT THE CHEAT!

CHEATS, TIPS & ESSENTIAL GAMING ADVICE FOR VIRTUALLY EVERY PC GAME

A SIMPLE CALL AND YOU'VE GOT THE CHEAT!

PERSONS AGED UNDER 16 CALL THIS NUMBER ONLY
09066 098033

PERSONS AGED 16 OR OVER MAY CALL THIS NUMBER
09066 098135

Calls to the above numbers cost 60p a minute

This service should only be used with the agreement of the person responsible for paying the bill. Calls to the number for persons aged under 16 years have a maximum cost of £3.00, the call will be terminated by forced release after 5 minutes. Calls to the number for persons aged 16 years and over have no maximum cost and call time restrictions. Ensure you are calling from a touch tone phone. Please put comments or queries in writing to: Interactive.Telcom.Ltd.8.Grants.Walk.PL25.SAA

or call **CUSTOMER SERVICE: 0800 1982784**

Check out our new web site at www.cheatsunlimited.com

WHO'S LOOKING OUT FOR YOU?

The Consumers' Association keeps a close eye on online trading

If there is one organisation that can offer an objective and far reaching view on the online shopping phenomenon, it's the Consumers' Association. Regularly battling with big businesses about hiked-up prices and intent on defending consumer rights, it's also responsible for *Which?* magazine and its digital counterpart, *Which? Online*.

The site's editor, Alan Stevens, has been working at the CA for almost 20 years and has been looking at online shopping issues for the past five years. So who better to ask about the real world view of 'Buying Online'?

PCZ: What is the Consumers' Association's take on online shopping?

AS: We're very keen to encourage online shopping, and the important thing for us is to try and educate consumers about how they can shop online safely.

PCZ: What are the advantages of buying online?

AS: There are several advantages – probably the most important one is convenience. From your own home, you can find a whole range of products that might be quite difficult to locate in the high street. There are also the likely cost savings – but there are no guarantees. Some products are actually more expensive on the Net because they're hard to find! Also with groceries online, there's the delivery charge to consider. Generally speaking, though, you can get products cheaper on the Web than you can in the high street and, of course, you can compare prices online much more easily.

PCZ: Are prices generally lower because of the lack of overheads online stores have?

AS: I think it's generally true for businesses that are new to the Internet. The companies that are actually set-up to have just a warehouse-based operation with no premises can enjoy those advantages. Interestingly, a lot of the established companies, ie some of the high street stores,

are setting themselves up as Internet companies to take on the competition and are finding it difficult to lower prices beneath their high street levels. So they are having to focus on things such as customer service and brand loyalty to reclaim their customers because they can't guarantee that price differential.

PCZ: What are the disadvantages of buying over the Net?

AS: Obviously, you can't see, feel or touch the goods, so you can't judge whether they are necessarily right for you. In the case of supermarket shopping, it can be quite difficult to tell from a piece of text what the product actually is – for example, is a 250gram box of cereal what you normally have? With mail order companies, if something goes wrong, you have to post it back to the company. It is not as easy as shopping on the high street – if something goes wrong, you can take it back directly to the store in person.

PCZ: What should you do if your order goes pear-shaped?

AS: Your first port of call should be the company that you bought the goods from. If you don't get satisfaction there, you could go to Trading Standards. As a last



The Which? Web Trader Scheme – if you see this logo on a site, you can be assured that you're in safe hands.

sufficiently badly that they were thrown out of the scheme was jungle.com.

They're back in the scheme again now, but prior to Christmas, we had a lot of complaints about the quality of its service. These related to things such as charging people's credit cards without dispatching the goods, not responding to customer queries, and generally being fairly poor in terms of customer service. We took all these complaints back to Jungle, and said: "You're a member of our Web Trader scheme and this is just not good

enough." We then gave them a list of things that they needed to do to improve their service by a certain date. They hadn't convinced us by that date that they had improved sufficiently, so we removed their kitemark. They then came to see us immediately to say that they really wanted to be back in the scheme because it was very important to them. They subsequently agreed to a list of changes and improvements to their operation, which were then carried out. We reviewed the operation again, making sure that all the outstanding complaints had been resolved, and when we were satisfied that everything was up to our standard, we then decided to allow them to have the Which? Web Trader kitemark back on the site.

“We've found that around 90 per cent of people who have bought online continue to purchase online. You now have four million people in the UK buying goods on the Net – a three-fold increase on a year ago”

ALAN STEVENS, EDITOR *WHICH? ONLINE*
ON THE GROWING TREND FOR ONLINE SHOPPING

PCZ: Do you get many complaints from consumers about online shopping in general?

AS: No, we don't – most people are very happy with their online shopping experiences. In fact, we've found that around 90 per cent of people who have bought online continue to purchase online. You now have four million people in the UK buying goods on the Net – that's a three-fold increase on a year ago and that trend looks set to continue.

PCZ: So what does the future hold for online shopping?

AS: I think it's likely that online shopping will move away from the PC towards both the TV and the mobile phone. That's certainly going to happen in the latter half of this year. Whether or not that gives a huge boost to online shopping remains to be seen, because we're still seeing around 50 per cent of people in the UK rejecting online services completely. In our last *Which? Online* survey, 48 per cent of people said that they would never be connected to the Internet. That really is a pretty significant chunk and when you bear in mind that a lot of those people are actually the consumers who might benefit the most from online services, ie people living in remote areas and so on, there's clearly a bit of a hurdle for online businesses to get over before it becomes a universally accepted way of buying things.

For further information on the Which? Web Trader scheme, pop along to www.which.net/



Alan Stevens – Editor of *Which? Online*: “The important thing for us is to try and educate consumers about how they can shop online safely.”

resort, you can go to the small claims court to get your money back. If you were buying with a credit card and the product was more than £100, then you could go to the credit card company because you're covered by its protection scheme.

PCZ: What about if you bought overseas?

AS: If you bought goods from outside of the UK, again you go straight back to the company. Chances are that they would be the people liable under the local country's legislation for sorting things out. It may be that you can go to a higher authority or court, but because you won't know the legal system or know the laws in the other country – even in the USA, laws vary from state to state – then you would have great difficulty. I suspect that if you didn't get satisfaction from the seller then you're pretty much stuck.

PCZ: Talking of protecting the consumer, what is the Which? Web Trader scheme?

AS: It's a seal of approval kitemark, which is on about 400 UK websites. We've had about 100 companies apply for it since June last year and the idea is that we check out those sites, make sure that they're safe and secure, and that they have a good customer service policy. If you see that logo, it means you can shop there in safety.

PCZ: What if something goes wrong? Can the consumer come to you?

AS: Well, the only company so far that performed

PC ZONE GOES 'SHOPPING ONLINE!'

PC ZONE

Search [your company name]

NEW PC

SALE PRICES

Quake III Arena £25.99
 Duke 3D £25.99
 Tomb Raider: Last Revelation £45.00
 Unreal Tournament £25.99
 Star Trek: Hidden Evil £25.99
 NFL Live: Opp Force £17.99

Prices incl. P&H delivery

SOLID BOLD TITLES **ESSENTIAL ADVICE**

We decided that we had to have another office copy of *Quake III*, so off we toddled to Gameplay in order to get a decent deal...

5 STAR service

- ★ SECURITY
- ★ PURCHASE PROTECTION
- ★ PRIVACY
- ★ SERVICE
- ★ REFUNDS

We briefly scanned Gameplay's policies on refunds, purchase protection, and also to quell any lingering doubts.

QUAKE III ARENA

CLICK IMAGE TO ZOOM

Featuring

- Stunning AI adversaries
- Eerily breathtaking graphics
- Retina searing weapons effects

Play this game for FREE using our **Wireplay** service.

We then clicked on *Quake III* in their product list and...

Order this item

... one brief product description later, we were ready to buy it.

Item	Description	Price	Quantity	Total
RM1896	Quake 3 Arena	£25.99	1	£25.99
Goods total:				£25.99

We took a quick look at our 'shopping cart' to make sure everything was in order.

Option 2: Create a new account

If you do not already have an account set up, you should create one now. Your credit card details are not stored with your account information and must be re-entered with each order.

Desired username:

Desired password:

Re-enter password:

Your real name:

Your address:

Your postcode:

Your telephone number:

Your email address:

Because we were newbies, we then had to create a new account.

Please enter your billing details

Please note all orders must be addressed to the cardholder and sent to the address to which the card is registered (normally where the statements are sent)

Card type:

Card number:

Card expires end of: 01 2000

Card is valid from: 01 1995

Switch issue number:

Name on card:

Time to slap in the credit card details, sit back and wait for the postman.

The padlock symbol at the bottom of your browser is an important part of online transactions – if it's closed, it's a secure site. If it isn't go to another site.

THE CONSUMER

PC ZONE asked punters from round the world to talk about their experiences of buying over the Net...

"I've tried online shopping a few times. I ordered a tuner from Richer Sounds online and it came within three days. I bought a graphics card from Insight and it came quickly, too. I would say shopping over the Net is worthwhile, as it is quick, easy and you don't have to go to shops, which are often more expensive. I would only recommend it though if you know exactly what you want."

Lucas Sinclair

"I've been shopping online regularly for about two years. In fact, I've built two custom PCs with all the parts entirely ordered over the Net. Indeed, since I relocated to a tech-starved area in Florida from the tech-rich Silicon Valley, almost all my hardware purchases have been made on the Web. Now that I think about it, even my office furniture was purchased online..."

Alex

"Online shopping has always been terrible for me. I regularly have to deal with places that advertise super-low prices, but then make up for it by charging ridiculous

shipping fees. I live in the US and I ordered a laptop computer which somehow got shipped to Argentina. I regularly get packages that don't include everything I ordered. I have received the wrong items on a couple of occasions (always inferior to what I ordered).



Rikk Streng – is 'e-cursed'?

"I have had stuff 'backordered to infinity'. One time, something was backordered so long that the credit card I used to pay for it expired before the item was back in stock – so my credit card failed when they processed it. They never shipped the item to me, and by the time I got it straightened out, the item was on backorder again! Customer service emails are also useless. As soon as there is a problem with the order or it seems to be taking too long, the item is going to be delayed... for a long time. My address is simple, my credit card information is always accurate and I always specify everything exactly as they want. Why I have these problems is unknown. My friends call me 'e-cursed'."

Rikk Streng

"I took a 'big chance' and sent my credit card number to a jewellery store in Russia – I needed a specially imported watchband which was ridiculously expensive in the States. It actually worked and they sent it inside a brochure – clearly, the transaction was 'invisible'."

Louise

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CHAT

Your technical questions answered

Feeling frustrated by your lack of co-ordination? Want to be the best player in the gaming universe? Then you've come to the right place – Cheat Master provides the cure for all your gaming ills, and if you're after a more personal service, look no further than **ZONE's** answer to Claire Rayner, Mr Keith Pullin...

IN TRUBS THIS MONTH...

116 CHEATMASTER

If at first you don't succeed... cheat. Allow Keith Pullin to show you how it's done.

117 DEAR KEITH

Agonising over how to get past certain levels? Can't sleep at night worrying about how to rescue Princess Tuftina? Then you need to call Uncle Keith.

118 TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION

Get into Lara Croft's, er, good books by guiding her through the latest epic title. Pete Davison leads the way in part two of this revealing walkthrough.

122 PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

Andrew Wright shows you how to face up to your tormentors and fight your way through to the bitter end in our exclusive strategy guide.

126 DEAR WANDY

Need a hand with a technical query that's bugging you? Our tech-head Wandy is here to help.

128 WATCHDOG

Getting your knickers in a twist over that bugged to jiggery PC game you bought last week? Sent a cheque to a company and received no product? Let the consumers' champion Adam Phillips guide you through your legal rights...

YOUR HOSTS



Phil Wand



Keith Pullin



Adam Phillips



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CHEAT MASTER

If you're after cheats for the biggest, the best and the most popular PC games around, you've come to the perfect place...

CHEATMEISTER Keith Pullin

ON THE CD



More cheats, tips and solutions than ever on the cover CD this month. Find out what's in store for you by looking at the Editorial section of your CD-ROM browser.

NEED HELP?

If your problems persist, you can solve them if you...

WRITE TO Dear Keith/CheatMaster, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with 'Dear Keith' or 'CheatMaster' in the subject line.

BATTLEZONE 2

Activision

Press 'ctrl' and '~' to bring up the console, then type one of the following codes:

game.cheat bztnf	Infinite
	ammunition
game.cheat bzfree	Infinite
	pilots and resources
game.cheat bzbody	Infinite shields
game.cheat bzradar	Full map
game.cheat bzview	Instant satellite link
play isdf	Play as isdf from 14th mission onwards
play scion	Play as Scion from 14th mission onwards

RAYMAN FOREVER

Ubi Soft

During the game type the following codes:

raylives	99 lives
gothere	Level select
raypoint	Full power
gimmelife	Full health
goldfist	Golden fist
power	Normal powers

gimmelumz Five free lumz
But wait, there's more. For these extra ones, make sure you're holding the 'Tab' key:

Points	Full energy
Goldens	View all gold coins
lives05	Five extra lives
lives20	20 extra lives
lives50	50 extra lives
moveray	Use cursor keys to move Rayman anywhere

NB. For the last four codes, when you've finished typing the code, press 'Backspace' rather than 'Return'.

PHARAOH

Sierra

While playing, press 'Ctrl', 'Alt', 'Shift' and 'C', then enter any of the following:

help homeless	Homeless people count
pharaohs tomb	Instant win
fury of seth	Seth goes nuts and destroys navy
living large	All houses upgraded

STAR TREK: HIDDEN EVIL

Activision

To activate the cheat, type the following codes during the game:

Kirk	Unlimited health
Spock	Skip to next level
Bones	Gives you hypospray
Scotty	All keys and passes

ULTIMA IX: ASCENSION

Electronic Arts

Go to the Ultima 9 directory where there is a file called 'default.kmp'. Open it with a text editor. Underneath where it says 'Cheat Commands' type these lines:

```
alt+shift+i = toggle_avatar_invulnerable
alt+shift+l = toggle_avatar_fly
```

OK, now play the game and press the corresponding keys

to activate the cheats. You can bind other codes by selecting a new letter. For example, 'alt, shift and p' is 'pass_one_hour'. Here are the rest:

```
unpass_one_hour,
sunrise_sunset,
pass_one_minute,
unpass_one_minute, toggle_sun,
toggle_wind, toggle_storms,
toggle_avatar_fast
```

Finally, if you open your backpack by pressing 'B' monsters will ignore you.

LEGO ROCK RAIDERS

Mindscape

At the main menu type these handy codes:

LRRWARP	Access all levels
LRRMONTY	Men become rock monsters
LRRVE	Access all vehicles

LEGO RACERS

Mindscape

More bloody Lego? Select 'Build' mode to create or edit a driver, and then type one of the following as the driver name at the 'make a license' screen.

flyskyhigh	Rocket car
fstfrwd	Turbo mode
nwhls	No wheels
nchss	No chassis

ASHERON'S CALL

Microsoft

During the game, type 'atoyot' for a strange commercial effect, or 'teapot' for a bit of a song and dance. You can also try 'snowangel' and our personal favourite – 'YMCA'...

SLAVE ZERO

Infogrames

While playing the game press 'T' to chat, then type:

/win	Win current mission
/goodies	Weapon upgrade
/mission 'NAME'	Go to Mission 'NAME'

/Wilcox Player shakes
/3prong Toggles shadows
 On/Off
/big ass Exit game
/onass Throws player
 backwards
/ouch Injures player

ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON

MicroProse

We've had a lot of requests for codes for this classic fun fair 'em up. So, here you are. Enter these codes as guest names:

BigBucks Unlimited cash
Chris Sawyer Photographer guest
John Wardley Constantly thinks: "Wow!"
Damon Hill Speed up go-karts
Melanie Warn Increase guest happiness
Tony Day Buys burgers
John Bilbrough Press 'L' to increase park rating
John Mace Pays twice the price to go on rides

Katie Brayshaw Waving guests
Simon Foster Artist guest
You can also try this: on the main menu, hold 'Shift', type 'rct2' and hit return. You'll hear clapping – you now have access to all scenarios. But it won't work on some versions.

INTERSTATE '82

Activision
 Press 'Esc', type one of the cheats and hit the 'Esc' key again to go back to the game. Enter as many as you like...

cuddle God mode in current vehicle
hugs God mode for all friendlies
kiss Destroy targeted vehicle
love Destroy all enemies on radar
caress Full ammo
imlame Mission win
syrup Freeze AI vehicles
mrfreeze Freeze time for AI
nukeme Suicide

WARHAMMER: DARK OMEN

SSI
 On the main menu type the following for fun and games...

Fudgeislush Enables 'troop roster' cheats. Once enabled, press the following key combinations during the game:
Ctrl, c and g Adds 1,000 to cash
Ctrl, c and t Subtracts 1,000 from cash
Ctrl, c and e Increases selected unit's experience
Ctrl, c and u Makes selected unit invincible
Dontnesswithme Enables 'book' cheats during game:
Ctrl, c and m Full quota of magic items
Ctrl, c and f Every unit full experience
Bringemon Enables 'battle' cheats during game:

Hold Ctrl Partial control of enemy units
Hold k Missile fire on selected unit 100 per cent accurate
Press w Increase magic points to max
Overbychristmas Enables more 'battle' cheats during the game
Press F12 Automatically win current mission
Squarewindow Map-magnifier
smeghead 3D heads go weird
blackmarket Unlimited magic items in multiplayer mode
bennyhill Fast action battlemode
Thelivinggem Warp to Great Forest 1
handyman Warp to where you meet Urgat
ridethestorm Warp to the second meeting with Azguz
youandi Warp to just before last mission

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DEAR KEITH

Stuck on a game? Brain melting? Fingers hurting? The man with the remedy is **Keith Pullin**

FUTURE PIMP

Q What the bloody hell is going on? I keep running out of money on *Earth 2140*. Is there any way to get loads without having to build it up? I know that sounds lazy, but I'm really new to these types of games and it is completely doing my head in. I just want to lark about for a bit and get used to it. Please help, I've enclosed a picture of my sister, she's dead fit...

Rick Stone, Liverpool

A Thanks, but no thanks. Look, if you haven't enough money, you'd better try this: save the game and exit. Load the save file into a hex editor. Go to \$13E8 and change XX to FF. Save the file and exit. Now start the game and load your save. Voilà! You sick pervert...

RUN FOR IT

Q I can't make the jump onto the Russian radio hut on the second level of *Indiana Jones And The Infernal Machine*. I've tried everything, but still can't do it. I don't want to buy a guide and spoil the game and waste my money, so please help!

Ben Balmer, Weston-super-Mare

A Ben, it strikes me that you haven't discovered your 'run' button. I suggest you press that while jumping for the hut to make it, OK. If that doesn't work, try pressing up while you jump to grab hold of the edge of the hut, and then pull yourself up. Honestly – you're just not trying.

HAVING A BALL

Q I'm playing through your *Thief: The Metal Age* demo (which is massive and absolutely brilliant) and I have to admit I'm a bit stuck. I've reached the Mechanist's Tower, but have absolutely no idea how to enter the locked study to retrieve the plans I need. I've killed virtually all the guards in the building, but none of them seem to have the key. I've even gone to the ballroom and nobody there has it either. Where is it? Please, please, please help.

Steve Butch, York

A Tut, tut. You've already been to the room where it is. That's right – the ballroom. If you wander over to the far side, you can hear and see two men having a serious conversation about security. One of those men has the key on his belt. Wait until he finishes chatting with the other guy and leaves. Follow him into the corridor and then pick his pocket to get the key. Don't try and kill him though, he hurls fireballs, and they hurt, a lot.

A LIKELY STORY

Q My little sister and I went on holiday to America, and on the plane we watched *Toy Story 2*. We thought it was so good we bought the computer game when we got home. But now we are stuck as we can't find where all the green lasers are. Do you think you could help us, please?

Alan & Mary Cole, Cornwall

A Alright then, since you asked so nicely. The first is in Andy's house: go to the garage and look on top of the van; the second is in the neighbourhood with the wrecked car; the final one is in the alleys and gullies – just turn right at the first airplane box. That's it. Have fun.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

Q I'm stuck on the fantastic adventure *Discworld Noir*. I've just found Regin's body and visited the Temple of Small Gods, but I can't seem to get anywhere else. Could you please tell me where to go next? Much appreciated.

Matt Gregory, Battle

A Once you've found the dead Regin, look into the cart and take the small bow. Malachite claims it's Therna's and snatches it from you. Now examine Regin's body and compare the body with iconograph. You'll find a key. Talk to the croupier who informs you that the key opens a locker in the Saturnalia.

Inside the locker is an envelope and lucky charm. Visit the Mansion and tell the butler to see the Count. Chat with him about Regin's murder, and then about the lucky charm...

Hopefully things should unravel themselves a bit from there. Good luck.

SIMPLY NOWHERE TO GO

Q Could you please help me? I'm stuck on *X-Wing: Alliance*, mission 7, Nowhere to Go? I can get the canister

of weapons, but whenever I try to get anywhere else the Imperials destroy the canister while it's still attached to me. I've been stuck on this for months. Maybe you can help me with a cheat or something?

Dennis Miller, Swindon

A Can't give you any cheats, Dennis; basically, you've just got to avoid combat as much as possible. This means that every time you're asked to fight, don't. Simply get as far away from the action as possible, and if you do run into a spot of bother try making use of your countermeasures – activating the turrets in defensive mode is especially useful. Hope that helps.

BIG RED THING

Q I was wondering whether you could help me on *Ecstatica II*. I am trying to kill the huge red monster in the big space at the beginning. I have been stabbing it many times, but it is not making any damage – it's virtually invincible. Please can you help me as I am totally stuck?

Kieran Lucey, Nottingham

A Seeing as you've actually sent in five letters, I'll try. Unfortunately you weren't too specific with the details, so this answer may not be exactly right. Anyway, I think that you need to get the silver sword from the attic; this should hopefully allow you to damage him and move on. If that's not the case, then I think it's probably best to avoid this guy for now... [E]

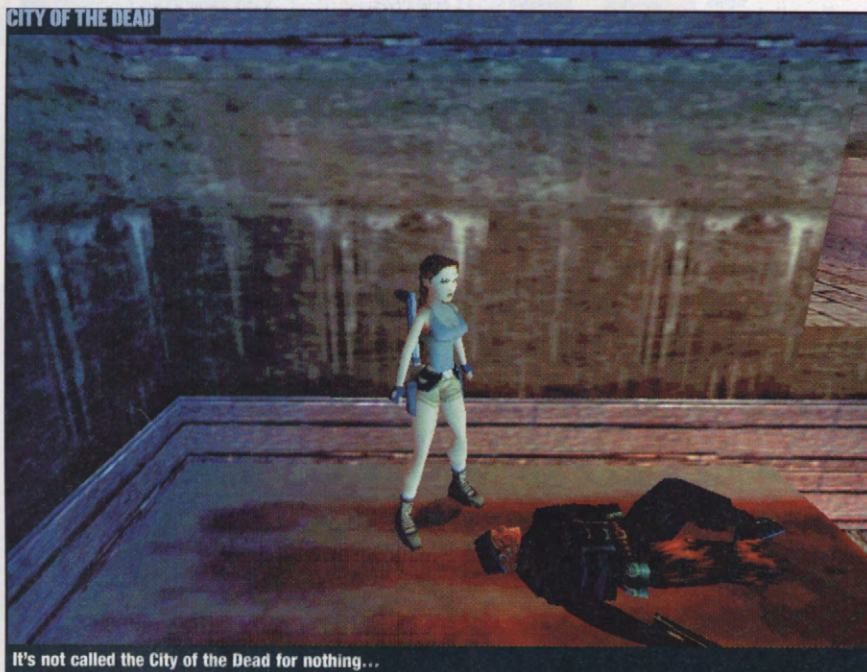
TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION

WALKTHROUGH - PART TWO

We left Lara hanging from her fingertips, but here's *Pete Davison* with the rest of our walkthrough

★ REVIEWED PCZ #83 SCORE 85%

CITY OF THE DEAD



It's not called the City of the Dead for nothing...

This month we bring you the second, and final, part of our epic *Tomb Raider*:

The Last Revelation
walkthrough. This game is so absolutely huge that we have developed a unique telegram style (that's short, sharp and to the point) of showing you how to get Lara to shirrrry, twist, turn, crawl, jump, climb, shoot and kill her way to the end of the game.

CITY OF THE DEAD

Shoot bloke. Nick Revolver.
Ride along street. Turn right
at archway. Get off bike, enter
building. Move corpse. Head to
bike, go through archway, turn left
at junction. Get off, climb up ledge
into building. Crawl through hole,
pull switch, head back to bike.

Drive up hump in middle of street, aiming for barriers. Smash 'em, crash through floor. Drive bike to corridor end, break wall. Get off, enter alcove. Drop into water, follow tunnel. Slide down slope to corpse. Nick laser sight, combine with Revolver. Look for wall crack, shimmy along until hole in wall. Climb in, look into pillar. Snipe pendulum. Run up pink steps, dive in water. Follow current. Climb out, follow passage back to corpse. Now water is frozen – cross and pull switch. Go back to pendulum room, into new door. Climb ledges. Don't drop – hang off ledge, shimmy to right. Leap across street, hang off lever to open gate. Blat blokey, retrieve bike. Head through gate, follow street. Drive up stairs, jump ramp. Follow tunnel. Pull switch on ledge at end. Drive bike up steep slope, emerge in stairway.

Opposite is new passage. Enter on foot. Leap across street, enter door. Snipe barrel to destroy guns. Running jump across street to reach switch. Pull it. Retrieve bike, go through open gate. Voilà!

CHAMBERS OF TULUN



⬆ Run away! Run away!

Follow street. Jump ravine. Stop at step. Get off bike, enter big south building. Get goodies from corners. Exit, drop bike at level start. Climb back into building through small opening. Run

through, nip around corner to trigger Big Dude. Run to room with small opening in south building. Climb blocks, leap to ledge over archway. Leap to crack in west wall, shimmy right. Jump to ladder, shimmy around corners to ledge. Pull lever on roof to trap Big Dude. Leap to ledge, west of rope. Swing on rope to south exit. Drop down hole onto bike. Leap ravine, back to where Big Dude appeared. Yank on wheel to open gate. Peg it through before giftcase breaks free... easy, huh?

awning, then jump to next ledge. Leap to next roof, then climbable wall. Shimmy around corner, zigzag across street until you reach orange-lit alcove. Climb in. Follow tunnel. Running jump across pit to right to reach jeep. Get nitro, leap over pit towards taxi. Run back to level start, leaping over fireballs. Talk to Aziz, return to Chambers of Tulun. Whew.

CHAMBERS OF TULUN

CITADEL GATE



⬆️ The Listerine dragon has a really bad day.

Talk to soldier. Follow street, run past beast. Climb step in green-lit area, climb low bit in north wall. Pull lever II. Climb southwest ledge, pull lever III. Drop down, pull levers I then III. Drop down south hole. Use crowbar as lever. Enter other hole, pull switch. Climb up, into new door. Running jump to rope, swing to south wall ledge. Running jump to left onto



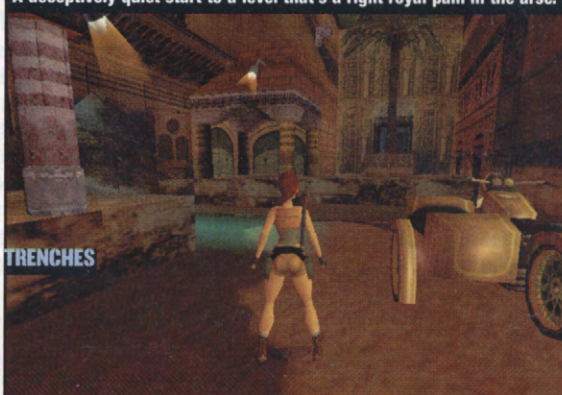
⬆ Vroom, vroom, vroom,
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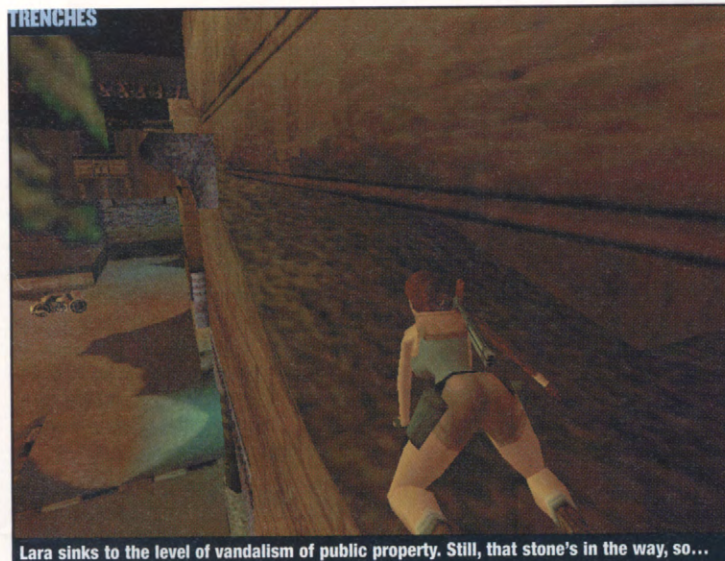
Go get bike, avoiding Big Dude again. Ride up ramp near where you left it to enter Trenches.

TRENCHES

Enter tunnel behind tree. Follow street, killing blokey along the way. Crawl around back of gun to gap in crates. Stand up, snipe tank on gun back to blow it up. Climb crates, jump to gap in north wall. At gap in left wall, crawl in.

A deceptively quiet start to a level that's a right royal pain in the arse.





Lara sinks to the level of vandalism of public property. Still, that stone's in the way, so...



Apparently Lara likes to tie her men up.

Kneecap bloke past end of tunnel, crawl through steam. Climb up, snipe back of gun and blokey. Go back out. At crawlspace on right, avoid steam, get code key. Come out, leap to crack, shimmy to end, around corner. Drop down, kill bad men. Crowbar engine. Combine pipe with nitro. Go back to bike, fit nitro. Head back to Chambers of Tulun.

CHAMBERS OF TULUN



① "OK... Jump... AAAAAARRRRGHHH..."

Ride to ravine. Nitro up big ramp into hole. Enter door, kill bad blokey. Slide down slope, enter northern tunnel. Get torch back to big room. Run down slope by entrance. Open door at end. Kill blokey, light torch. Back to big room. Run up slope to door. Hold torch under sprinkler. Enter door,

pull lever. Run back to torch room. Climb crate, running jump to ledge. Drop down. Shoot crates, shoot gate lock. Check hole. Fetch bike, back to Trenches again.

TRENCHES

Go up green-lit stairs, climb east block. Grab trapdoor handle in ceiling. Climb in, follow tunnel. Blast stone in crack, shimmy around corners to ledge. Leap to bars, Tarzan across street. Kill bad dude, unlock door with Roof Key. Running jump over street to ledge. Shimmy left. Follow corridor. Snipe red button. Back to bike. Head west, nitro up right-hand stairs, keeping left to make jump. Get off bike, climb east wall to exit level.

STREET BAZAAR



② "Another bloody monster," sighed Lara dejectedly as the Egyptian bull charged. "Some people never learn."

Drop to floor. Get detonator. Grab handle from table. Go behind car, get jack body. Combine for car jack. Push red button, follow corridor. Climb ladder. Jump to monkey bars, swing right. Nip into crawlspace to south. Use jack on south wall to open trapdoor. Climb onto roof. Push box behind lightning into alcove. Shove funneled machine into lightning. Cross bridge, running jump to ladder. Shimmy around corners, drop to ledge. Enter tunnel, descend holes. Enter crate room. Go down ramp to find mine codes. Go to crates in southeast corner and let bull charge you, leaping aside at last minute. Follow tunnel to end level.

THE TRENCHES



③ Boooooom.

Nip back up ladder near where you left bike to bazaar area. Exit

garage through east door. Follow street to north, exit by minefield. Combine detonator with codes, use detonator. Boooooom! Push red button, retrieve bike. Drive around corner to exit.

CITADEL GATE



④ If all else fails, use a big truck.

Nitro, angling slightly right over pit. Save first! Speed back past Halitosis Boy before he burns you up. Go find Aziz.

CITADEL

Free Jean. Head south to stairs in next room. Pull lever, grab torch. Light it. Burn rope back below. Drop into floor hole in first room, follow tunnel. In big cave, jump to left ledge, then ledge beyond steps. Hang above small pool, drop and grab crack in wall.

Shimmy along until another crack is below you. Drop and grab. Repeat until you reach corridor. Crawl through, drop into water, follow to next crawlspace. Drop to sloped bit. Quickly... Backflip! Jump forward! Grab! Hang from north wall. Shimmy to alcove, running jump across room to south ledge. Climb steps, push lever. Drop down hole, descend stairs. In big room, push pedestals onto circles corresponding to direction printed on top. Exit west. Follow tunnel, climb up, enter water. Swim south. Pull lever in ceiling. Go back, take north tunnel. Follow corridor back to compass room. Head east. Kill baddies, pull lever. Back to compass room, go through north door, into water. Exit west. Pull lever. Swim through north exit. Leave water. Follow tunnel, yank chain to open door. Head through, follow tunnels to crawlspace. Drop into next room, avoiding Crusaders. Climb ramp. Stand by barricade, wait for Crusaders to attack, then leap aside. Head through, climb up and follow path past torches to escape.



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SPHINX COMPLEX



Zero points for nasal aesthetics, full points for ominousness. Mwahaha.

SPHINX COMPLEX

Run forward. Kill baddies, get key. Use key on lock. Running jump from ledges to pull both levers. Go through new door.

Slide down to platform in north pit. Jump to ledge. Leap to northeast ramp, clamber up. Cross next pit in similar way. Kill bloke, enter door. Yank bookshelf out of the way to reveal airvent. Crawl through, kill bloke, bash switch. Shoot crates for blade.

Cross pits again, towards Sphinx front, crossing further pits in same way as before. Head for tombstone between legs. Cross huge pit carefully. Kill ninjas, shoot crates to get handle. Combine with blade for shovel. Use platform to hop over leg to tombstone. Dig in front of tombstone to open exit to next level... mwahaha...

UNDERNEATH SPHINX

Run toward bull. Lure it into open room, pull lever to trap it. Repeat with the other. Get paper from skeleton. Read. Spell out AIQ on slabs on wall. Go through west gate. Leap pits. Be careful of concealed one down slope. Check alcoves with binoculars. Now go back to buttons. Spell out AQI — northwest gate opens. Enter, leap pit. Take north crawlspace, turning left twice for Matt Stone. Take south crawlspace, turning left, right, left to find switch. Pull it, go back to stone buttons. Spell QIA. Enter southwest gate. Leap pit. Kill crocs. Pull switch on west wall to open gate. Check four holes in walls to open grate. Get stone, head for buttons. Spell IQA. Go to east door, jump pit. Press

right switch on north wall, then right switch on east wall for stone. Back to tablets. Spell QAI. Enter southeast door. Jump pit to flat platform on right, shimmy around corner to left. Jump into water. At junctions, go south, east, south until switch room. Pull switch. Head back north, west, up, up. Get air. Jump back in. This time go south, west, up. Pull switch. Head back east, up, up. Breathe... Go east, south, south, west, up. Pull switch. Go back west, up, east, up, up. Breathe. Go north then east. Pull switch. Head back down then up. Last one... East then up. Yank lever, get stone. Head back west, up, up. Exit. Back to coloured alcove room. Put stones in slots. Go through gate, swing across pit. In next room, grab Scripture on left, hop back and somersault

sideways to get next one. Roll, get next one. Repeat manoeuvre to get last one, quickly! Run out. Walk straight across next big room to avoid losing legs. Then swing across chasm to victory.

MENKAURE'S PYRAMID



① "How the hell..."

Climb up southeast ledge. Hang from trapdoor. Head out. Kill giant scorpions with grenades. Running jump diagonally left across north ravine. Leap across pit in front of

pyramid and head east. Jump to south stone that faces big building. Slide, jump halfway down. Leap to safe ground. Enter building. Try and kill scorpion before guard dies — this way you get Armoury Key as well as pyramid keys. Head out west. Hang from ledge to right of ravine, shimmy left around corner until you can't go further. Drop down. Climb pyramid using less-sloped blocks. On longer stable section, running jump to west, slide down to reach easy route up. Climb up, running jump to entrance when you see it. Unlock pyramid, enter.

INSIDE MENKAURE'S PYRAMID



① Rope swinging: "fun".

Avoid blades, head downstairs, snipe star in ceiling on way. Jump in coffin. Swing over pit. Take right fork, swing over, pull switch. Head back to other fork. Swingy-swingy. Climb up, kill guard. Pry key off wall. Head upstairs, enter passage. Hang from trapdoor. Climb out, kill scorpions. Take east path. Push button in alcove. Climb east pyramid. Climb down ladder inside top. Follow passage, leap pit. Grapple across next one. Jump over side of next two to avoid blades. Pull chain. Go back to passage on south wall. Swing across. Go through gate. Slide down slope, jump at last minute. Climb out into Sphinx Complex.

Staring at the hieroglyphics, Lara managed to decipher "Tutankhamun woz 'ere".

THE SPHINX COMPLEX



① These gates are your ticket out. Or is it just the beginning...?

Platform hop over ravine to right of sphinx, heading south towards steel doors. Use guard keys on lock, pass through. Great, huh?

MASTABAS



① Monkey see, monkey do...

Check behind truck to north for petrol can. Take east passage. Enter north door, open trapdoor. Follow tunnel. Take east passage, shoot gems in lion mouths. Get small waterskin, head back to junction, take south tunnel. Climb out. Leap ravine to south. Shoot barricade, enter door and trapdoor. Deal with lion heads as before. Climb out. Open door, shoot barrier. At ravine, leap northwest twice. Enter trapdoor. Go west, get torch. Go east, shoot lion heads. Fill waterskin from pool. Put water in left plate, petrol in middle, sand in right. Burn petrol with torch. Go west, get key. Enter other door, shoot lion heads. Take west tunnel for exit. Cross ravine by running jump northeast, running jump and grab south. Enter door and trapdoor. Follow tunnel out. Shoot barricade, enter door and trapdoor. Head east. Shoot lion heads. Use crowbar on right socket. Chase monkey to ledge — he'll open door. Get key from side room, enter other door, follow corridor to exit.

GREAT PYRAMID



① Climbing the pyramid is a monumental pain in the arse.

Climb out of tunnel. Kill baddie. Leap southwest over pit. Enter

building, pass through doors. Ignore trapdoor, open next door. Leap ravine to pyramid. Slide down west. Leap west. Climb up next few blocks. Jump east when you can't go further. Watch out for boulders. Despite trying to kill you, these point out useful routes. Jump east twice, climb one. Jump east three times, slide down. Zigzag over pit. Now carefully follow climbable blocks up pyramid. When there's nowhere else to go, running jump west and slide to safe platform. Continue upwards. Your aim is to slide off the southwest corner to safety. Good luck!

KHUFU'S QUEENS PYRAMIDS



Yes, I know it's hard to believe, but you really are going up that one too...

Kill nasties. Get goodies from rooms — you need Armoury Key for one gate. At chasm, jump to pillar on left. Running jump to northwest. Avoid scorpion, leap across chasm. Jump south to next block. Climb up. Running jump north, DON'T press Action. Standing jump northwest. Running jump over chasm. Running jump north. Push rubble west to end of path. Enter pyramid. Open trapdoor, climb down. Turn right at all intersections. Kill Guardian, get last key. Head back north, east, north, west, north at junctions. Climb up. Leap chasm. Hop north again. Climb pyramid diagonally northeast. Use key on lock, enter.

INSIDE GREAT PYRAMID



Ooh, pwetty... Lara is just moments away from the final level.

INSIDE GREAT PYRAMID

Stay left to leap pit. Head up east tunnel. Go between ramps. Jump as each trap reaches midpoint. Get torch from coffin, light torches. Pull switch in west alcove. Exit this area, climb the ramps. Put Shaft Keys in slots. Pull switch. Kill baddies. Head back to first corridor. Standing jump first pit. Running jump next. Standing jump again. Drop to ledge below, leap to gate. Climb carefully down shaft into corridor. Enter to begin final stage.

TEMPLE OF HORUS

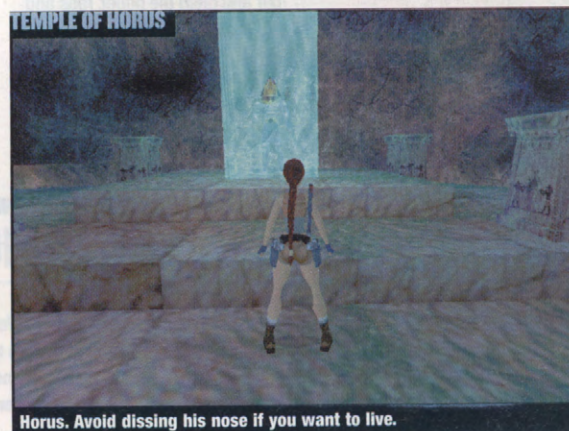
Get big waterskin. Fill, combine with small. Pour large into vase on scales. Climb down pits, avoiding blades. Empty both skins. Fill

large one. Combine with small. Empty small. Combine large with small again. Fill large. Combine with small. Pour large into vase. Descend as before. Empty skins again. Fill small. Combine with large. Pour small into vase. Climb down shaft. Shimmy to ledge when you can. Leap north into water. Climb onto island. Use Scriptures on pedestals. Aaaiee! Scary Horus! Jump into water. Find Amulet then head up west slope. Pull switch. Climb northeast slope. Pull switch. Go back to first slope. Leap east to solid ground. Work your way up the room using ledges. Running jump to left of stalactite. Leap to crawlspace, crawl through. Follow ledges. Jump to climbable wall. Shimmy

into light (this protects you from Horus) and climb up. Head through gate. Avoid block traps as earlier. Stay at side to avoid falling pillars.

Slide down slope, leap to next ledge. Running jump next two. Run away! Finish the game! Cheer! Weep at pitiful ending... [PCZ]

TEMPLE OF HORUS



Horus. Avoid dissing his nose if you want to live.

meet new enemies

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PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

STRATEGY GUIDE

Andrew Wright, the other Nameless One, shows you how to face up to gronks, grilligs and devas in our exclusive Planescape: Torment walkthrough

★ REVIEWED PCZ #86 SCORE 87%

This *Planescape: Torment* walkthrough should give you all the necessary hints, tips and tricks you will need to find your way successfully through to the end of the game.

THE HIVE

The game proper starts in The Hive, which has five main areas: the current one (labelled northeast on your world map), the marketplace (southwest), the

flophouse (northwest), the Smouldering Corpse Bar (southeast) and the Alley of Dangerous Angles.

Leave the mortuary walls and turn due south for the tomb. Rest up if needed. Tidy your inventory. Keep the item of junk and the pry-bar and ditch the paper, rags and other useless items.

There are more than 20 quests in The Hive given to you by NPCs — complete as many as you can, so you're strong enough for the next stage.

If you want to become a mage or a thief, go to Ragpicker's Square (west to the flophouse and then north). Mebbeth helps you become a mage, while Ratbone will train you as a thief. It's best to make the change as early as possible so that your 'easy' experience from The Hive quests will boost you quicker.

It's essential to visit the Smouldering Corpse and get Dak'kon to join you. Also, talk to Emoric and Norochj in the Gathering Dust Bar and get the

quest to enter the mausoleum. It's full of goodies, but wait until you're at least 4th level before you try it, possibly even higher for mages and thieves. You can gain experience by completing quests and carving up the gangs of thugs.

RAGPICKER'S SQUARE

Make sure you visit Sharegrave and get the quest to find out where Pharod's getting bodies from. Also, visit Mebbeth in

Ragpicker's Square for some rest, free healing and as many cures as you can afford (raise cash by selling in the marketplace, in the southwest section).

Follow the wooden walkway leading to a portal. If you have the junk, it will act as a key. If not, search around for more. The portal leads down to the trash warrens and the rather large 'underground' section of the game.

In the trash warrens, speak with Anomoli and talk your way

STARTER'S ORDERS — GETTING OUT OF THE MORTUARY

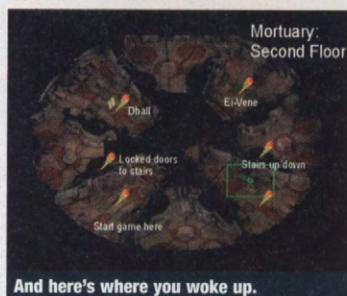
After your conversation with Morte, search all the cupboards and desks for a scalpel (weapon) and bandages. Kill all three zombies as one has the key which will open the locked door to the northwest.

Make your way clockwise around the second floor, moving your mouse around constantly to highlight containers and searching them all for goodies. Speak with Dhall and a

dustwoman named Ei-Vene who gives you your first quest. It's not necessary to kill all the zombies and dustmen, but you will earn some experience.

came up. If you've killed a dustman, put on his robes so the other dustmen don't bother you. If not, just avoid them or kill them — they're not tough.

armour (800 xp each). If not, avoid them. Go to Deionarra, speak to her nicely and she'll give you raise dead ability. Just don't tell her you're leaving. Head southwest until you come across Soego. He'll let you out into The Hive. Alternatively, you could just kill him and take the key, or head north and exit via the blue portal.



And here's where you woke up.



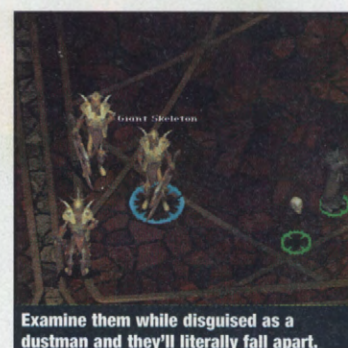
Get the key next to the stairs.

Take the stairs up to the third floor where the north and south storerooms have plenty of goodies. Your aim is to grab the key from the cupboard outside the west stair room. Search the west stairs, but descend the same way you



Here you'll find your first quest.

Go down to the first floor by unlocking the door next to the stairs then go up. In the centre you'll find four huge skeletons. With your intelligence 15 or higher, you can examine them, disintegrate them and take their



Examine them while disguised as a dustman and they'll literally fall apart.

around him. If you have to fight, keep pulling out and healing at Mebbeth's if necessary. Get used to this tactic — you'll use it a lot!

Explore the rest of the trash warrens to uncover loads of rats and thugs. Take them on a few at a time. To the north, you'll find a portal (you need a rat tail) to a secret room full of magic items and rats. Southeast is Bish, a heavy you'll probably have to fight. A trapdoor in the floor leads to the Buried Village.

Pharod's Court is northeast of the Buried Village. He tells you to go down the catacombs (southeast exit) and retrieve his bronze sphere. Barr should open the gate if you mention Pharod. To get back out again, just twist his arm (literally).

There are traders in the village with useful items. Visit Marta (west) and let her remove the +1 ring from your guts.



➔ Go southeast from the Buried Village to the Catacombs.

THE CATACOMBS

Here be cranium rats, wererats, ghouls and lesser vargouilles (bats to you), none of which are too tough. Just make sure you're at least 5th level. Remember, only magic weapons harm wererats. Search everything, as there's lots to grab and the quests are easy.



➔ The exits from the Weeping Stone area.

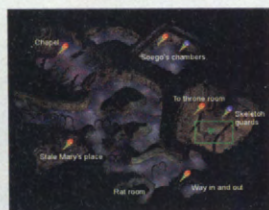
RAGPICKER'S SQUARE



The all-important portal down to the trash warrens beneath Ragpicker's Square.

DEAD NATIONS

First thing to do is the Dead Nations. Submit to Hargrimm and the Silent King. Find Stale Mary (southwest), then speak with Hargrimm about her language. Return to Stale Mary and get the ability to speak with the dead, which helps with several quests. There are also a couple of quests from Hargrimm and completing them is the only easy way out of the Dead Nations. The alternative is to kill the Silent King and grab the key. You'll have to wade through everyone else though, so make sure you're in good shape.



➔ Getting in is much easier than getting out.

WARRENS OF THOUGHT

This area is optional, but you can gain a lot of experience. When Mantuok throws you into the prison, search around for some healing items, cash and goodies. Leave by smashing open the south door (or picking the lock) and then talk your way out if you don't fancy the odds. Many-As-One, in the northeast, will offer a quest to discover the Silent King's secret — use the key in his Throne Room.

DROWNED NATIONS

In the Drowned Nations you're looking for Pharod's bronze sphere. Go southeast and take the third tunnel east, then go down the southwest stairs, south and east. Now head back to the Buried Village, talk to Pharod to get some answers and give him the sphere. Allow Annah to join

you. Once Pharod dies (cut-scene tells you), go back to his court and re-take the sphere. It makes things a lot easier at the end.

TENEMENT OF THUGS

Annah takes you to the Tenement of Thugs. Empty the entire place and enter the Alley of Linger-

Sighs. Kill the dabus and pick up its hammer. If you don't have a crowbar, there's one in the Tenement. To the east is a gate — go through to where you died. Talk to the alley wall and undo the dabus' repairs to get through to the Lower Ward.

LOWER WARD

Morte is taken off you here. He ends up on the bottom floor of a wrecked house, but you have to complete two quests to get him back, one back in the catacombs.

CLERK'S WARD

Here you'll find Nemelle, who'll eventually give you the password for the Decanter of Endless Water, which in turn allows you to free and recruit Ignus the mage from the Smouldering Corpse.

Go to the Civic Festhall to become a sensate. Sleep in the chambers and get your key. Unlock your chamber, force open the cupboard and take the dodecahedron and anything else you want. Next, move on to the brothel.

BROTHEL

In the first room on your left you'll find Finam's book. Take it to Finam's house and ask him about the dodecahedron and notes of language on it. Read the notes, then all of the dodecahedron.

LOWER WARD



The marketplace is well worth a visit if you've got cash on you.

you'll be back

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MAIN → NORTH ARCH → FIRST LEFT DOOR → ARCH BACK WALL



Recruit an important ally, Fall-from-Grace, in the brothel.

Fetch your legacy so you can get a receipt for the Great Foundry. First go and buy some exotic items from the Curiosity Shoppe — fiend's tongue, deva's tears, and chocolate quasit. Go back to the brothel and speak to Ecco. Ask why she can't speak and when given a quest to help her, give her the fiend's tongue and then the deva's tears.

Take the chocolate quasit to Quell, who's a mage in the private sensorium (ask Splinter how to get there), and ask him about Ravel. He tells you to seek someone at the brothel. Speak to Ecco and she tells you Ravel has a daughter in the brothel. Speak to the other whores about her and eventually you'll find the truth, as well as the chance to recruit Fall-from-Grace, a priestess, into your party.

Ask the daughter for a blood sample in a handkerchief. Now you are ready for the Great Foundry. Go back to the Lower Ward. To the north is a locked gate. Speak to the guard, give him your receipt and enter the Great Foundry.

GREAT FOUNDRY

Inside, head for the clerk's office, give him the receipt in return for the portal to Ravel's maze. Then take the next door further up (on your right). Go and speak to Kendor in the hall. Forge a weapon so you can become a godman by visiting the big forge and speaking to Thildon. Take a piece of ore. Put it in the furnace and return to the forge and return to the forge and return to the forge.

Now do the murder enquiry quest (speak to Alissa Tield about it). Now speak to Thildon and Saros over and over until you get the truth, then report back to Keldor.

Then speak to Sandoz and try to dissuade him from suicide. Answer 1-2-1-2-1-1-1, otherwise you won't convince him. Go back to Keldor and become a godman. Buy any useful stuff from him, plus magical armour in the tailor in Clerk's Ward.

Next, prepare to seek out Ravel, but have lots of charms and gallons of blood clots. At the maze, make your way to the centre and speak to Ravel. After she's told you to seek out the deva for more information, ask her how to get out and then start arguing. Just don't end the conversation. Kill her and escape at the west end through the portal.

CURST

Now you're in Curst. You need to complete five quests (see Tainted Barse in the tavern) to put together a key. Go to the dump in the southwest corner of the first Curst map and go down the stairs. Watch for traps. Voorsha will give you a quest to kill a gehreleth to the east and north. There are lots of trelons, too, but cloudkill is an effective spell if you're a mage. When you get back to Voorsha, he attacks you. That's gratitude.

Where you killed the gehreleth, you'll also find a hermit

who lets you rest and buy cures. Head west and then, on the next map, head north and west, watching out for Curst guards, trelons and traps, until you open the gate and find the imprisoned deva. You must find his sword and free him — only then will he answer your questions.

Head north from Trias' chamber and then west. In the large hall, search the barrels carefully — there is cash and magic items. To the south lies the entrance to the prison, but it's full of Curst guards and you'll need to keep returning to the hermit to heal and rest.

You need to kill them all because one has a bone key to unlock the gates.

There's another key in one of the cells that can be used to free Vhailor the Mercykiller. Follow the prison corridors round until you find the room named Celestial Fire. Trias' sword is in there, but you'll have to beat the guard at a contest of wits or speed or use the usual method — obliteration.

Return the sword to the deva and then head northeast to the portal, freeing Vhailor by unlocking the nearby door.

OUTLANDS

You're now in the Outlands. Head west, after finishing off the gronks and grilligs, to Fhjull Forked-Tongue's house where you can rest. Talk to Fhjull and find out about the portal to the Pillar of Skulls. Leave Fhjull and go east to the portal, which is in the body of the skeleton.

Now you're in a very dangerous place called Baator. All members of the party should be at least 10th level or above to survive here, preferably 14th or higher.

Exit via the southeast corner to the Pillar of Skulls, an oracle who will answer your questions. However, you need to offer a gift each time, so ask wisely, and consider detaching Morte before entering as the Pillar wants him handed over. Essential questions are how to get out and the location of the Fortress of Regrets. Return to Fhjull's house via a door in the southwest of the Baator map. Depending on how your conversation with the Pillar

went, Fhjull will either help you or attack you, together with loads of dragons and lemures.



The pillar offers lots of answers, but it'll cost you.

CURST GONE

A portal in the skeleton's tail gets you back to Curst, but it's a very different Curst, one that's been laid to waste by Trias in an 'alternate universe'. There are several quests that will improve your chances when you finally confront and kill Trias. Rest in the barracks or distillery. Creatures re-spawn here, so you could theoretically go up several levels.

Trias is on the third floor of the Administration Building in the southwest corner. When you've dealt with him (after learning as much as possible), go northeast to the portal. You end up back in The Hive just outside the mortuary — a full circle.



Defeating Ravel the deva.

Not too hard, but make sure you speak to him as much as you can before dispatching him.



You can rest in the grain silo in the northeast corner of the first Curst map.

Heal, rest and visit all the traders in the area to stock up. You need all the healing items you can get as well as charms to protect you against magic attacks. Sell everything except what you'll need. Give the Nameless One everything because he'll be on his own soon.

Now enter the mortuary and head northeast to the portal. Talk to your party a bit and go through.

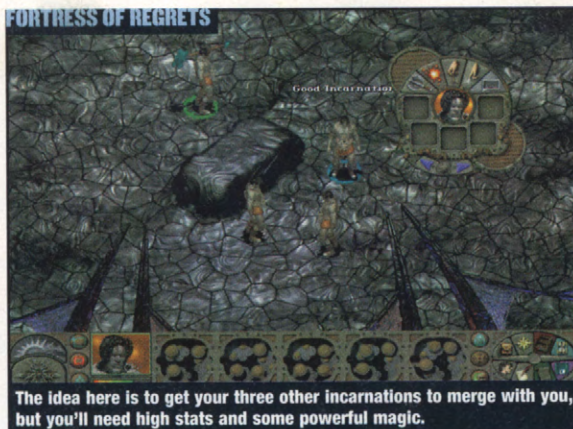
FORTRESS OF REGRETS

Talk to Deionarra first and then look for the four machines that will switch on yet another portal in the northeast.



❶ In the Fortress of Regrets, you have to avoid the shadows as best you can while searching for the four portal machines.

Inside the Trial of Impulse, you have to defeat either Ignus or



The idea here is to get your three other incarnations to merge with you, but you'll need high stats and some powerful magic.

Vhailor, but there are lots of power-ups and charms around.



❷ After the Trial of Impulse, take the sounding stone and exit.

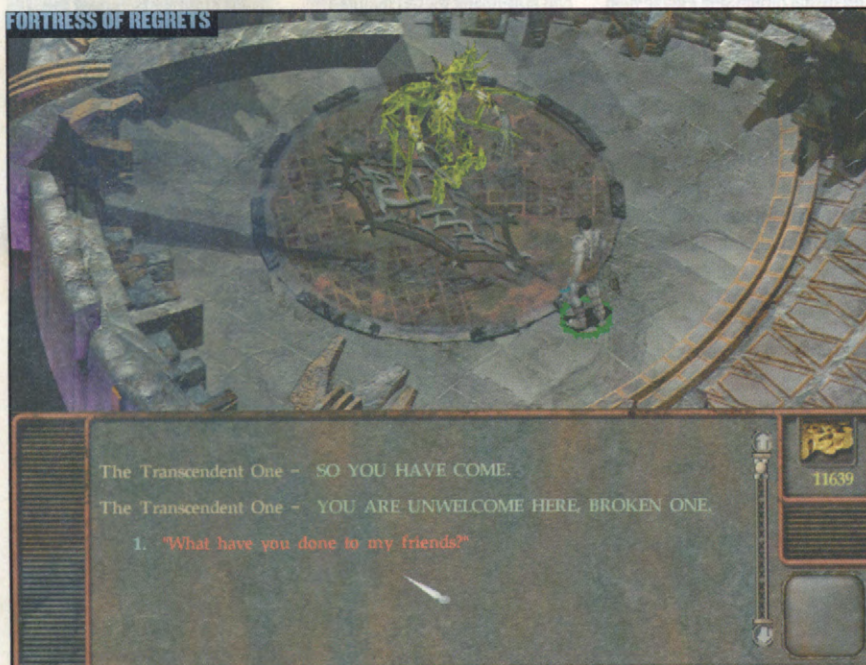
In the Maze of Reflections, try to get the three incarnations to merge with you. Don't let the practical incarnation absorb you – destroy him if necessary. The

good one will join, but if you don't speak the language of the dodecahedron, you'll have to despatch the paranoid one too.

The final showdown comes when you face the Transcendent One, but there are several ways you can win, from threatening to end your life with the Blade of the Immortal (a quest from Coaxmetal in the Lower Ward) to battering it to death. The options available depend on your intelligence, wisdom and charisma. Having Pharod's Bronze sphere will help.

At least at the end you'll have a name, if nothing else. [27]

FORTRESS OF REGRETS



The Transcendent One - SO YOU HAVE COME.
The Transcendent One - YOU ARE UNWELCOME HERE, BROKEN ONE.
1. "What have you done to my friends?"

When you're up against the Transcendent One there are several different endings.

PLENTY OF CHARACTER

As for your initial abilities, choose wisely

- High strength lets you intimidate some NPCs and, of course, fight better
- High intelligence gives you extra dialogue options, helps you regain memories and identify items
- High wisdom means you get an xp bonus, extra dialogue options and warnings of danger

- High dexterity gives you extra dialogue options and better armour class
- High constitution lets you regenerate faster as well as gain more hit points
- High charisma gives extra dialogue options, cheaper goods (from 16 plus) and lets you lie more successfully. As if you would...

TORMENTED TIPS

The only way you'll get strong enough to complete the game is to finish quests and defeat monsters

Nameless One starts as a fighter but he can become a mage or a thief fairly early on (Ragpicker's Square). To switch between mage and fighter, just talk to Dak'kon or, later on, Annah, if you've taken the thief route. All three have strengths and weaknesses. Fighters are best early in the game, but mages quickly overtake them. At 9th level, when they gain 5th level spells, such as cloudkill, they can dispense more damage to more enemies. Thieves have little to recommend them.

If you particularly want Nameless One to improve quickly, consider booting out other party members before you 'collect' your experience at the end of a quest, then ask them to rejoin. Just don't do it too often or the others will end up weak.

Some quests can be repeated again and again (at least they can until the patch is released) – for example, at the Ravel sensory stone in the Civic Festhall, just keep returning and continue to answer the questions, you get 6000 xp every time. Also, things like cranium rats and abishai re-spawn, so just keep on killing them.

Use containers and chests to offload gear you don't expect to need, like spare or apparently useless weapons, rags, books, paper and so on. If you discover you need something later, it'll still be there.



The full Planescape map shows just how far you have to travel.



Remember to use thieves like Annah to sneak about – this 'damsel in distress' is not what she seems.

DEAR WANDY

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THE TROUBLE WITH TRIDENTS

Q I can't get *Half-Life* to run on my machine. All my mates have it, and most of them are in *TFC* clans, but the game simply will not run on my damn PC! OK, so I admit I have a Frankenstein's Monster of a box: PIII 450, 4Gb hard disk, 128Mb RAM, 16x CD-ROM, SoundBlaster 16 (hey, I did say it was monstrous) and a Trident Silverstone 2Mb VGA card with a Voodoo1 accelerator attached to it. When I install *Half-Life*, the process goes smoothly. But when I get to the start menu and click 'New Game', the screen goes blank and that's that. The PC locks up, *adios muchachos*, reboot and uninstall.

So is it my pants video card or some other nasty little setup niggle? Can you help? Should I just open my wallet and fork out for a new 3D card? Hope you can help, 'cos my mates sure don't. They just sit around laughing about it – the bastards.

Steve Leese

A You don't say which video option you select in *Half-Life*. The best option is OpenGL, and for this you'll need a MiniGL driver for your 'pants' video card. The reference driver that we recommend is available for free download from www.3dfxgamers.com

Given the fairly reasonable engine lurking behind everything (with the exception of the sound card), I think upgrading to one of the modern combined 2D/3D cards is long overdue. The 3dfx *Voodoo3* range is highly respected and well supported, as are the NVIDIA TNT2 and impressive GeForce 256 cards.

ROCKWELL ROCKS LESS

Q I have a Rockwell K56 modem. When I try to connect to the free ISP X-Stream using the company's 0800 number, it takes forever. After 15 connection attempts, my modem automatically disconnects and I can't get a dial tone... even when I try to dial other ISPs. Please help me out on this – 'cos I've tried everything. By the way, your mag is the best!

Shehzad Mahroof

A Hmm. This could be caused by many things. If you have the latest correct drivers, we suspect you either have too many things plugged into the line (a maximum of four, or you pull the line level too low), a dodgy modem cable, or that BT has put a DAC on the line. A DAC is used by BT when the engineers run out of

copper wire to a road or building, and it allows them to 'double up' by compressing two separate lines onto one piece of copper. Unfortunately, it's an older idea than the Home Highway boxes, and greatly reduces the bandwidth to a point where many V90 modems simply can't negotiate a suitable connection (see previous letter). So you could well be out of luck until you move home...

MODEM MISFUNCTION

Q Please help me solve this problem. I am using Screaming.net as my ISP, and the thing is, I regularly get disconnected. I'm lucky if I can stay online for ten minutes. I understand that this is the poor man's provider, but other people I know who use the same service say they hardly ever get disconnected.

I am puzzled as to why this only happens to me. Another twist is that when I try playing certain games online, *Half-Life* being one of them, I get disconnected when the game tries to connect to the server. Stranger still, when I'm actually in the game, I hardly ever

get disconnected, and can often keep the connection for the full three-hour timeout period.

I know that this problem isn't a virus because I've just reformatted my disk and it doesn't happen with any other ISP. I would really appreciate it if you could provide an answer to this problem.

Daniel Holman

A Is this modem month or what? Ahem. We've heard similar strange reports about Screaming.net. It seems to all boil down to plain luck of the draw: some people swear by it, others swear at it. It's all about hardware and line quality, not just what's inside your machine, but also in the ISP's modem racks.

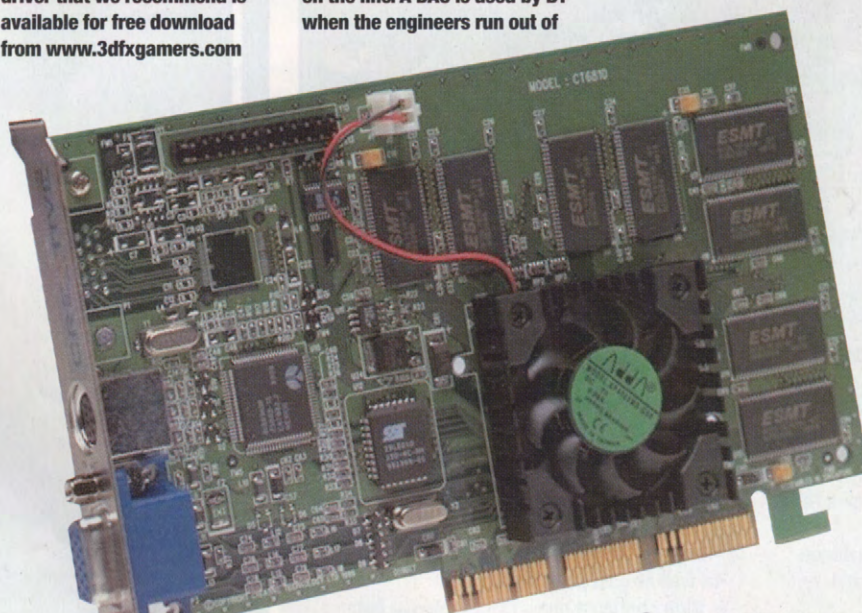
All I can do is repeat the advice given in an earlier question: check the number of telephones and answer machines plugged into your phone line. The limit is four REN. The REN rating of a telephone tells you the load it puts on the line – when this load gets too high, odd things happen, such as some phones ringing while others remain silent. It also tends to reduce the level of signal on the line. I'd suggest unplugging everything else from your telephone line – including anything 'chained' from the modem phone socket – and see if that helps you.

BRAWN ON A BUDGET

Q In this day and age, I get baffled by the amount of 3D accelerator cards on the market. I don't know which is best, which ones will work, or anything. I'm not a rich bloke, so I need some simple advice on the cheap end of the 3D stocks. I want to buy a card for around £50 (give or take ten or fifteen quid), and I want to perk up my graphics for *Half-Life* and any new games I buy. I am also a keen online *Half-Life* and *Air-Attack* fan. I don't know if I need anything 'special' for these at all? So, it would help me and others, I'm sure, if you

"I am using Screaming.net as my ISP, and the thing is, I regularly get disconnected. I'm lucky if I can stay online for ten minutes"

DANIEL HOLMAN,
AT SCREAMING POINT WITH HIS
ISP PROBLEMS



Ⓢ The lovely TNT2 Ultra, now at bargain prices thanks to the arrival of the GeForce 256.

could shed some light on this kind of situation.

James Nicholson

A Buying cheapo graphics cards can often be a false economy. Personally, I'd try and stick to known and trusted makes with well-known graphics chips, such as 3dfx or TNT. The 3dfx Voodoo3 2000, for example, comes in at just under £70, including VAT. It's absolutely ideal for those of you on a budget.

You don't say what sort of guts your PC has – so you may find that a new video card will only highlight the shortcomings in the rest of the system – but a PII 266 MHz machine with 64Mb of RAM, a Voodoo3 2000 and a 56.6Kbps Hayes Accura should be well up to the job of playing *Half-Life*.

HALF-LIFE? NO LIFE

Q I'm well miffed with the updates on *Half-Life*. After installing the updates from the *OpFor* CD, and *OpFor* itself, it decided it would piss me off by giving an error message when I try to run *H-L*, *TFC* or *OpFor*, saying: "Your *Half-Life* executable has been modified. Please check your system for viruses and then re-install *Half-Life*."

Two of my other mates also have this problem. Can you please help because we can't play *OpFor* or any of the add-ons, mods and wot-nots from the PCZ cover discs. Are there any patches

that could go on your CD, or can you even talk directly to the makers and ask them what to do? Could you help me get my £20 worth out of *OpFor*?

Rud (& Rob & Bicki)

A When you try to use update patches, you must make sure that you are running the correct version. The update files have names such as 10051015.exe, which means it upgrades from 1.0.0.5 to 1.0.1.5 – and nothing else. Before any of these updates run, they will check the *Half-Life* executable to ensure the patch will work correctly, and if it doesn't like what it sees, you should get an error message. Errors can be caused by changes made by things like the very naughty 'No-CD' or serial number patches you find on the Internet. The safest thing you can do is to delete your install of *Half-Life* and then reinstall from scratch. We've installed *Half-Life* together with *OpFor* a 1,000 times now and – as long as you don't go applying cracks or weird patches – it works. Honestly.

MY PC MOANS AT ME

Q Whenever I boot up my PC, it makes a 'groaning' sound. I have taken off the case to have a listen for the source of the noise and it appears to be coming from my power supply, which is ATX. Have you any idea what the problem is and how it might be

solved? Any help you could give would be much appreciated.

Antony Kay

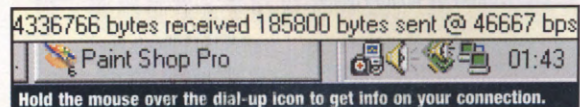
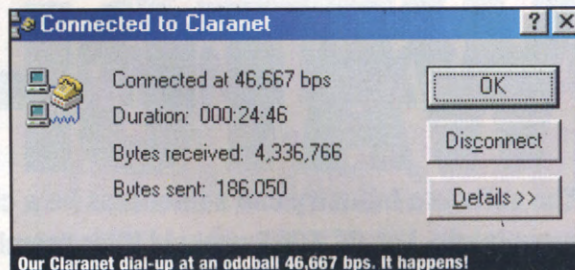
A What you have is a cooling fan in its death throes. If this fails, you could be in trouble if you have the machine switched on for more than a few minutes. The PSU (Power Supply Unit) fan is usually the only thing that extracts the hot air out of the case. If this stops turning, the case temperature will rapidly rise, along with the temperature of most of your components. If you're lucky, the PSU will fail first and power everything down – if not, you can overheat hard drives and lose data or even kill your processor. Nasty stuff.

It might be possible to unplug the machine, take the PSU apart and oil the bearings in the fan, but we wouldn't recommend that unless you really know what you are doing. So replace the PSU as soon as possible. These days, we reckon it's cheaper to buy a whole new ATX case which should come with an integrated PSU.

GOT THE JITTERS

Q I've just been given a CD Writer for Christmas, and I've tried to copy audio CDs. Trouble is, the CD I copied 'jumps' – any idea why? My writer unit is a 6x write, 4x rewrite, 24x CD-ROM. I have a 166MMX processor and secondary 24-speed CD-ROM.

Lee Barnes



A Copying CDs is illegal – we assume you're doing this purely for backup purposes, and not piracy. In regards to your question, it sounds like you have a scratched or dirty audio CD, so it could do with being backed up! When you pull music audio from the original CD in digital form (a process known as 'ripping'), many CD drives are extremely bad at error correction and you get jumps in the source. When you record to a new disc, you effectively have a nice new unscratched disc with recorded scratches!

When copying audio, we recommend reading the audio onto the hard drive first and then playing it back to check it's OK. If it has 'clicks' or skips every now and then, try cleaning the music CD, lowering the read speed and increasing the error correction if you burn software.

You can use fine polish to clean scratches from the surface of CDs. Believe it or not, we've had some success with T-Cut. Always polish from the centre of the disc out to the edge – do NOT go round and round as this can cause the laser to miss tracks.

WHERE'S ALL ME BITS?

Q This may seem like a stupid question, and it probably is, but I'd like to know what is happening to my 56K modem. When I connect to the Internet, the 'properties' box tells me that I am connected at 44,000. Now, personally I've never heard of a 44,000 modem, but the real worry is that when I'm downloading, my download speed never goes faster than 4.3K a second – usually around 2.5-3.2K per second. Surely a 56K or 44K modem should reach download speeds of at least 10-20Kps? I connect with Virgin and IC24, and it's always the same. What

is happening to the missing 'K'? Is BT pinching it and trying to force me to upgrade to Home Highway? Any help/words of wisdom appreciated!

Nic Simmons

A 56K is the theoretical maximum possible in a perfect world, with a perfect connection to your ISP. When your modem connects to the ISP, it negotiates a possible speed based on what your modem can do, what the ISP's modem can do, and what the ageing length of copper wire in between will allow. This negotiation starts at 56K and works its way down in steps until they can both 'hear' each other reliably. 44,000 or 46,667 are quite common speeds to settle on – very occasionally you might see 48,000. The highest we've seen is 52,000, and even that didn't last long before the line quality caused the connection to drop.

As for working out the download speed, be careful with the units. A connection of 44,000 is 44,000 bits. So, assuming the file you are downloading cannot be compressed by the modems, you might think 44,000 bits per second divided by 8 bits to the byte equals 5,500 bytes per second. Unfortunately, there are overheads involved in sending data via the Internet using a modem, so it's more likely to be a good deal less than that amount.

You may have noticed that there's no winning letter this month. This is for a simple reason – we reward useful entries, not grovelling ones. So listen here all you techie-minded people: it's time to do some serious head-scratching and show off your knowledge. You might be able to answer something we can't, and earn yourself 50 quid in the process. [E]



Opposing Force: not a patch on *Half-Life*? Well, all of them actually.

WATCHDOG

The software industry can sometimes be a closed shop when it comes to punters and their complaints. Let **PC ZONE** ramraid their premises for you and snatch some answers...

ANSWERED BY Adam Phillips

LIVING IN A WORLD OF HURT?

We're here to help. If you've got a consumer issue that needs addressing, then drop us a line. But please remember that technical issues are not covered by Watchdog – if you have a techie problem, write to Dear Wandy (page 126).

WRITE TO Watchdog, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.

EMAIL us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading 'Watchdog'.

YOUR DETAILS PLEASE...

If you are writing in to complain about a product, whether it be a rosey piece of software or a shoddy PC, please furnish us with your full name, address and contact number. With PCs especially, make sure that you also include all purchasing details such as reference and invoice numbers. It means that we can resolve your problems much quicker.

THEME PARK CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS?

Q After waiting a whole year for Bullfrog's *Theme Park World*, I immediately went out and bought the game when it was finally released. I live in a boarding school which boasts a fairly average PC with an AMD K6 350 and 64Mb of RAM.

I played *Theme Park World* on this machine during the last week of the school term quite easily. It only jerked occasionally, but I was really looking forward to getting home for Christmas and playing the game on my own PC with the advantage of 3dfx graphics – using my Voodoo-based Maxi Gamer 3D – and the slightly faster PII 350, again with 64Mb of RAM.

When I try to run the game though, it plays the opening video, but then decides to stop dead while loading up. It then stops responding completely. Nothing will get it going – not even the power button – so I have to switch off the computer at the wall. I have emailed Bullfrog and visited their website, but all to no avail. Can you help?

James Bellman

A Switching it off at the wall? Blimey, that can't be doing your PC much good. Off we trotted to TPW's executive producer, Jeff Gamon, to see if we could get an answer to your peculiar situation. He said: "The fact that the game installs and runs past the intro movie indicates that the problem is with your video card or more likely its drivers. *Theme Park* does tend to utilise the most recently implemented features of the chipsets it supports – Voodoo 2 being one of them. Your machine spec is more than adequate for running the game. I'd definitely recommend that you download the latest drivers for your card or contact our customer services department on 01753 546465 for additional support."

Jeff said that you could drop in to www.guillemot.com/uk/index.html (if you live in the UK) and look under 'Drivers Video/Imaging Products MaxiGamer 3D'. In there, you'll find the latest drivers specifically designed for your board. If these don't work then you could try the 'reference



Emergency shutdown.

drivers' (which work with a number of Voodoo 2 boards) – you can get these from www.3dfx.com Jeff finished off by saying: "Apologies for any inconvenience you have experienced. Please don't hesitate to contact Electronic Arts' customer services department with any future queries." Let us know how you get on, James.

OH-OU...

Q I recently purchased *Ultima Online: The Second Age*. I've really enjoyed the game and made full use of the free 30-day trial. Unfortunately, when it came to subscription time, I found that you could only subscribe if you had a credit card. While the rest of the UK market is geared up for debit cards and the like, it seems that this isn't an option when dealing with Electronic Arts.

ANOTHER UNREAL DEAL?

Q Last year I bought a 3dfx Voodoo 3 card, which included a coupon for *Unreal Tournament*. I sent the coupon with a cheque for P&P in June/July last year (when the game was supposed to be released). But my cheque was returned uncashed with a note saying I would be asked to send in the cheque again when the game was released.

It also stated that I would get the game within six weeks of release. I rang GT two days before the game was released and was told that GT was in the process of contacting every 3dfx owner to send in the money for P&P.

I hadn't received any such letter, but late in December 1999 it was on the 3dfx gamers' website that all owners who had

submitted a coupon should resubmit the money for P&P before the end of the month. I then posted my cheque and a cover note to GT's new address – and have been waiting ever since. I rang GT (13 January 2000) to ask if my money had been received, but the spokesperson said it was probably in a pile on someone's desk waiting to be processed.

As I cannot get an answer from GT about when I will receive the game, I can only ask you for some assistance.

Peter O'Dowd

A Help is at hand. GT suspects the reason there was a problem is that you sent your cheque back in before you received a letter asking for it – so there was probably some sort of cross-over at the

fulfilment house. A spokesman offered: "GT apologises if Peter's cheque or paperwork for this promotion has gone missing. We will now send out his copy of *Unreal Tournament*. To date several thousand 3dfx

customers have received a copy of *UT*. If any readers have had similar problems, we ask that they email their details to: corrall@mediat.co.uk and we'll resolve them as soon as possible."



It must be about fraggin' time.

“When I try to run the game it plays the opening video, but then decides to stop dead while loading up. It then stops responding completely”

JAMES BELLMAN, ON HIS *THEME PARK WORLD* DILEMMA

Since I couldn't subscribe with a Switch card, and I have no desire to get a credit card, I opted for the 'gametime' option where you buy gametime in 90-day chunks. This you can pay for by Switch. Not so...

I ordered my gametime on 3 January, expecting a piece of mail, including my gametime code, to be delivered promptly. I enquired three days later as to a delivery date, giving my email address and the order code I had been quoted with the electronic confirmation I'd received. The enquiry was answered with a request for further information about my order. I provided it, but then had no further response. Never mind, I thought, I'll phone them. The telephone call revealed that I could expect the package the following Monday.

Monday came and went. No gametime. I telephoned again, and was told someone would check it out and email me. Nothing. Phoned again. This time I was told the delivery address was wrong. It was! This was changed. Waited a couple more days. Still nothing. Enquired as to delivery, again. Turns out that there is no record of my order now...

How odd. I checked my confirmation email, and visited the EA website, where my account told me I had one order for the *UO* gametime, paid for and awaiting despatch... Another phone call to EA's customer services department, and finally it was revealed that the website has been screwed up since before the New Year. Great. So it looks like I've been wasting my time and money all along. I should have gone out and got a credit card! In *UO*, your possessions decay if you do not visit regularly, and it's going to be a while yet before I can re-connect to the game. Why can't EA have a UK/debit card-friendly service? Can you suggest it to them?

Dan

A After all that Dan, EA only had this to say: "This customer has experienced administrative errors and we would like to apologise for the inconvenience caused. His order will be traced and fulfilled promptly."

Short and sweet, bless 'em. So, did you ever get your gametime, Dan? If not, let us know and we'll drop our friends at EA another line. As for buying stuff online, we'd recommend using a credit card online with whatever transactions you make – that

way if anything goes seriously wrong (ie someone who shouldn't gets hold of your details), your losses should be covered by your credit card company. See our 'How To Shop Online' feature on page 108.

WAGING WAR

A This Christmas I was given *Warzone 2100* as a present and when it didn't work, I was predictably disappointed. I tried everything to make it work and in the end, I emailed technical support. I expected a reply that would tell me what to do, but instead I was emailed a guide on how to install *Fighting Force*! I feel incredibly cheated by Eidos.

Mike Tetstall

A Ahh, a short, succinct letter. That's how we like 'em. We went to Eidos to see if it could help shed some light on your *Fighting Force* hiccup: "I am sorry to hear of the problems Mr Tetstall has experienced in receiving support for *Warzone 2100*," said a spokes bod. "At the moment, Eidos Customer Service is focusing on telephone support, simply because of the increased efficiency of problem solving and support via this medium. We've found in the past that email support is less effective for getting help when dealing with a large number of products and a large customer base. We have an automated system that may simply have sent the wrong FAQ due to the content of the subject line."

Eidos says it is evaluating the demand for email support and the best way to provide such a service.

"If Mr Tetstall would like to contact the Technical Helpline on 0121 356 0831, one of our support staff will discuss the technical problem with him and we will endeavour to resolve it quickly and efficiently," promised Eidos.

NORRA LORRA LARA

A I have a Microsoft Dual Strike controller

We're always glad to see the back of her.

and I bought it primarily on the strength of Microsoft's advertisement. This states that it replaces the keyboard/mouse combination often used in action games. The controller takes a bit of getting used to, but works very well in games such as *Half-Life*, *Unreal* and *Quake*, to name but a few. Imagine my dismay when I purchased *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation* and discovered the controller can't be used to its full advantage.

There is no 'mouselook' function within the game and therefore the controller will not use its perspective motion to look, although all the buttons are recognised. Is there any way at all to get this function working? I wouldn't mind so much, but if you look at Microsoft's ad, lo and behold, it uses a picture of Lara Croft to help promote it!

Ian Grimwood

A Sounds like an unfortunate situation. But fret not because Stephen Harrison, technical customer support at Microsoft, has this helpful explanation: "The Microsoft Sidewinder Dual Strike was released before *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation*, therefore it was not possible to include a pre-defined scheme for an unreleased game."

So what can Ian do to get the joystick working with the game properly? "We did anticipate some questions surrounding this issue, so once the final version of *Tomb Raider* was released, we created a new, fully working scheme," offered Stephen.

Indeed, you should be able to download it from the Microsoft website by the time you read this, Ian. If you don't have an Internet connection, don't worry because we've slapped it on our cover disc as well. **WZ**

PCZONE

COMING NEXT ISSUE

NEED FOR SPEED: PORSCHE 2000



We were thinking of drafting in Mystic Meg to write this column – since we haven't had much luck in predicting what's going to appear in the magazine next month. Games have always slipped – it's almost a tradition – but the situation seems to be getting worse and worse each month. *Vampire*, our supposed cover game for the past two months, has now slipped again and we're going to be lucky to see it next issue now. Our policy of only reviewing finished games is still firmly in place and we're not letting it slip for anyone.

HONEST REVIEWS

Despite solid assertions from PR companies and developers alike, games like *Vampire*, *Ultima IX: Ascension* and *Soldier Of Fortune* have failed to materialise yet again. We're definitely expecting Raven's ultra-violent blaster next month, and we're also confident that *Ascension* will be deemed fit for a UK release. If you've seen any other reviews of this game in rival titles, we can guarantee that they have been muddled from the bugged US release – hardly a decent indicator of what the finished game is going to play like when it's released here. What else? *Star Wars Force Commander*, *Need For Speed: Porsche 2000*, EA Sports' *Cricket 2000* and *Sudden Strike*. Plus, *Beetle Crazy Cup*, *F1 2000*, *F1 World Grand Prix*, *Majesty*, *Gunship* and *Simon The Sorcerer 3D*. Allegedly.

TIPS, CHEATS AND WALKTHROUGHS

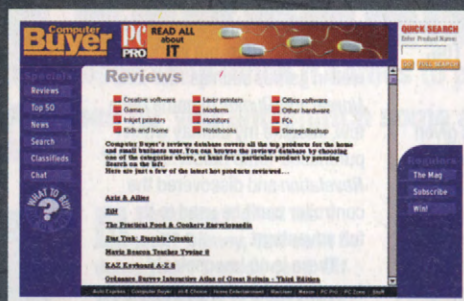
Having problems with your favourite games? Keith Pullin is here to get you through the toughest challenges. And we've got complete solutions for two of the best games to be released in the past few months, *Final Fantasy VIII* and *SWAT 3*.

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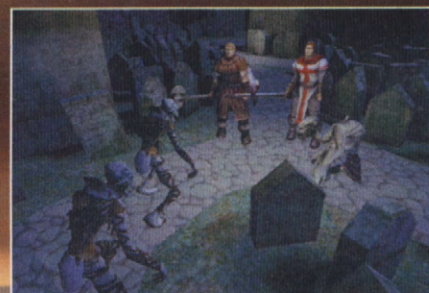
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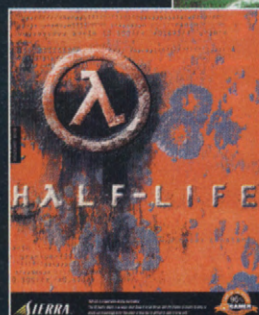
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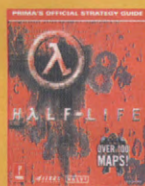
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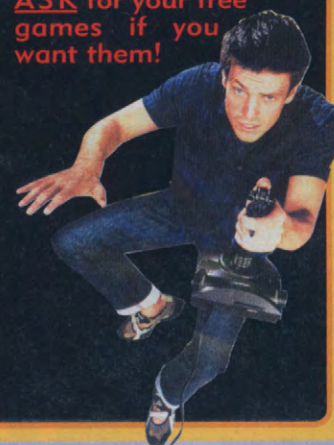


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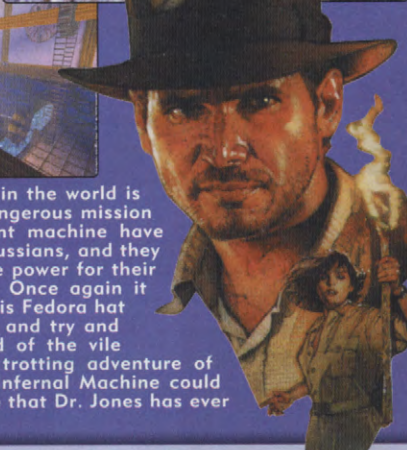
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PCZONE TOP 100

Welcome to the definitive buyers' guide for all discerning PC gamers. The games that grace these pages represent the best titles across all genres. Check here for regular updates

This is the new *PC ZONE* Top 100. Within it you will find the best games you can currently buy for your PC. All the games here deserve a place in our illustrious Top 100 as we go to print, but that could all change next month when newer titles come in and older games receive new ratings to reflect where they stand in the great scheme of things. Shrewd buyers will always check here first before parting with their money.

BENCHMARK GAME

Benchmark titles are the games that you simply must have if you are a fan of the genre. They are considered by the *PC ZONE* team to be absolute classics

and should be bought without hesitation. All new games are compared to their genre's benchmark title when they are reviewed. Bear this in mind before writing into Mailbox complaining that the latest 3D shooter didn't automatically get 90 per cent; check here first to see what it's up against! Additionally, all games in that genre will receive a new rating every time a new benchmark title comes along.

NEW ENTRY

In the wonderful world of PC gaming, new titles come in every month that are often better than some of the games in the Top 100. When this happens, they will gain their rightful place in the Top 100, and a lesser title will drop out to make room for it.

BUDGET

If a game in the Top 100 is available on budget, it will be tagged accordingly. Games that are lower in price than other titles in their genre do not necessarily receive a new score to reflect this. The latest score the game received will still apply; it is up to you to decide whether or not the game is worth buying at its new price point.

GAME OF THE MOMENT

These are the games currently residing on our hard drives



MARTIN FREESPACE 2



CHRIS PLANESCAPE: TORMENT



DAVE PLANESCAPE: TORMENT



RICHIE UNREAL TOURNAMENT

PCZONE CLASSIC

Under the new *ZONE* scoring system, new games will have to be pretty spectacular to receive this award. They will have to take their genre to unprecedented new heights, and represent a major step forward for PC gaming. As you can see from the *PC ZONE* hall of fame on page 65, there are now very few titles that can justifiably be described as *PC ZONE* Classics. This trend will continue across all genres. Generally speaking, all *ZONE* Classics are must-have titles (the benchmark title being the definitive game of the genre), but that does not mean you should discount games that score 80+ per cent. We consider all recommended titles to be excellent examples of their genre, and you should only dismiss them if the subject matter is not to your taste. Classics, on the other hand, are games we think will appeal to everyone who likes that particular genre. There will not be many of them. When we say a game is a classic, we mean it!

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FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS

HALF-LIFE

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #71 • 95%

✱ It may well be over a year old, but that doesn't detract from the fact that *Half-Life* is still probably the best game you can install on your PC. Taking the first-person shooter as its starting point, *Half-Life* redefines the genre with an engrossing story, cracking atmosphere and some of the best Artificial Intelligence ever coded.

PUBLISHER Sierra
• 0118 9209 100



UNREAL TOURNAMENT

PCZ #81 • 90%

✱ Played over a network or the Internet, *Unreal Tournament* is more than a match for *Quake III*'s multiplayer, with a combination of well-designed maps and diverse gameplay. The single-player mode might be too short, but it's still going to be more than a challenge for most.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791



QUAKE III ARENA

PCZ #87 • 89%

The biggest brand name in PC gaming is back. The sheer speed, intensity and unrelenting action of *Quake III* makes it an essential purchase for all shoot 'em up fans, but sadly the lack of variety prevents it from topping *Unreal Tournament*.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



ALIENS VS PREDATOR

PCZ #77 • 87%

✱ It might not be the best, but it's definitely the scariest FPS you can buy. *Aliens Vs Predator* is also the only game that offers three distinct ways of playing through the game, so if you're looking for a solid single-player blast this provides excellent value for money.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



QUAKE II: QUAD DAMAGE

PCZ #59 • 86%

✱ The sequel to 'the most important PC game ever' turns out to be more than worth the wait. Single-player mode might be a let-down, but if you have access to a network or a fast Internet connection you'll be in heaven. Now available as a pack with all the official mission packs.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



BUDGET

THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT

PCZ #72 • 84%

✱ Forget about going in with all guns blazing, *Thief* is set in medieval times and the object of the game is to fill your pockets with treasure without being caught. The fact that the guards can hear you coming means that you've got to learn new tactics to get out alive.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 0181 636 3000



SHOGUN: MOBILE ARMOUR DIVISION

PCZ #71 • 81%

✱ Half *Quake*, half *MechWarrior*, this game breathes fresh air into a stale genre. Great graphics and storyline, its only faults are an iffy AI and the fact that it's a bit too easy for hardcore *Quake* fans.

PUBLISHER Microids • 00 33 1 4601 5401



KINGPIN: LIFE OF CRIME

PCZ #77 • 80%

✱ This controversial title should be talked about for its excellent gameplay and graphics rather than its violence and swearing. Because, quite frankly, that side of the game was crap. We still stand by the game though – it's "classic adult entertainment".

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



BUDGET

SIN

PCZ #70 • 80%

✱ Releasing *Sin* at the same time as the vastly superior *Half-Life* was commercial suicide. But you can now bag this title for less than a tenner, which gives you the perfect excuse to find out just how good it actually is. No classic, but an excellent game in its own right.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 0181 636 3000



BUDGET

JEDI KNIGHT/ MYSTERIES OF THE SITH

PCZ #74 • 77%

✱ As a double pack, this ageing 3D shooter and its expansion disc represents outstanding value for money. Dated graphics, but the level design is superb and the missions are some of the best ever made.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01895 456 7000

STRATEGY

AGE OF EMPIRES II

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #84 • 90%

✱ It might not be radically different from the original, but sometimes evolution is just as good as revolution. In *Age Of Empires II*, the gameplay has been honed to perfection with balanced units, and strong single and multiplayer campaigns. You'd be advised to forget the hype of *Tiberian Sun* and enjoy this classic RTS instead.

PUBLISHER Microsoft
• 0345 002000



CIVILIZATION II: TEST OF TIME

PCZ #68 • 89%

✱ A title that lives up to its name, *Civilization II* is probably the oldest game in the Top 100 that will still be around in years to come. Turn-based and in 2D, it offers unlimited replayability and depth. One of the few games that everyone should own.

PUBLISHER Hasbro • 0181 569 1234



HOMEWORLD

PCZ #82 • 85%

✱ *Homeworld* delivers the dream of millions of PC strategists the world over: a fully three-dimensional, strategic experience. The vast expanse of space is the battleground, the hundreds of ships at your command the weapon, and the only limits are your imagination.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100



IMPERIUM GALACTICA II

PCZ #85 • 83%

Space expansion and empire building has never looked so good. This title boasts the depth of a turn-based strategy game with the immediate action of real-time, plus a great interface and tutorial, so you'll know your way around in no time.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791



C&C: TIBERIAN SUN

PCZ #81 • 82%

✱ Perhaps not as stunning as one might have hoped after a three-year wait, *Tiberian Sun* is nevertheless a truly great game. Pushing the *Command & Conquer* genre to its limits, it offers PC strategists immense depth, detail and variety.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



BUDGET

TOTAL ANNIHILATION

PCZ #56 • 82%

✱ With a ridiculous number of units and unrivalled pace, the original *T4* still stands head and shoulders above more recent efforts. No story to speak of and weak single-player action, but still, for a tenner, no-one should be without a copy.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791

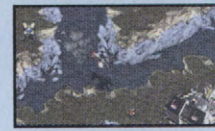


DUNGEON KEEPER 2

PCZ #79 • 81%

✱ *Dungeon Keeper* was a great idea. However, *DK2* plucks the essence of the original game, corrects all the mistakes, vastly improves the graphics, and takes the excellent concept introduced by its predecessor to the next dimension.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



STARCRAFT

PCZ #64 • 80%

✱ Still one of the most popular games online, *StarCraft* offered three distinct races and one of the most involving stories yet seen in real-time strategy. It may look a bit old hat nowadays, but it runs like a dream if you're still doggedly hanging on to your P90.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100



WARZONE 2100

PCZ #75 • 78%

✱ The first proper 3D real-time strategy game to be any good, this sci-fi effort offered almost unlimited variety thanks to a semi-dynamic campaign and masses of research. Might take some getting used to, but it's worth the effort.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 0181 636 3000



POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING

PCZ #70 • 75%

✱ The original *Populous* was the game that put Bullfrog into orbit and made Peter Molyneux one of the biggest names in the industry. Now Peterless, the new Bullfrog team show that they can do just as well without him.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

SYSTEM SHOCK 2

BENCHMARK
GAME

PCZ #80 • 93%

★ Definitely one of the most compelling, original and disturbing games to hit the PC, *System Shock 2* manages to successfully roll the genres of role-playing, action and adventure into one. Play it in the house on your own with the lights off to prove how hard you are. In short, it's a title that's absolutely indispensable.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

PCZ #87 • 87%

★ An incredible game from Black Isle, creators of *Baldur's Gate*. It's a dark, adult, scorcher of an RPG. Moreover, the character development is the best we've seen in any game of its kind – and the story is compelling, with well-scripted dialogue.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

BALDUR'S GATE

PCZ #73 • 85%

★ With every developer 'going 3D' these days, it's refreshing to find an old-school RPG that combines traditional D&D role-playing with sumptuous 2D graphics. In a nutshell, *Baldur's Gate* is intelligent and involving in equal measures.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

FINAL FANTASY VII

PCZ #66 • 84%

★ Despite the recent release of *FFVIII*, we still rate this earlier episode in the series above it. The story is better, there are more subgames and the whole thing is more involving, especially if you like Japanese-style cartoony graphics. And it should be out on budget soon.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000

FALLOUT 2

PCZ #71 • 83%

★ Does exactly what it says on the tin. Twice as big as the original, but utilising the exact same engine. If you liked the first game, you'll love this – not twice as much, but certainly for twice as long. A real life-sapper and one of the best RPGs money can buy.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

FINAL FANTASY VIII

PCZ #87 • 83%

NEWENTRY *FFVIII* features westernised graphics and the most incredible cut-scenes we've ever seen on a PC. Like its predecessor, this outing suffers from console linearity and repetitive battles, but it should still entrance most gamers.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 0181 636 3000

DIABLO

PCZ #48 • 78%

★ Standard hack 'n' slash fare, but pulled off with such style that it's addictive. A great storyline compensates for repetitive arcade combat and supremely detailed animation makes it a superb coffee-table game. The much anticipated sequel is out this summer.

PUBLISHER Zabalac/Blizzard • 01626 332233

ODIUM

PCZ #87 • 74%

NEWENTRY Imagine an RPG in the style of *FF*, with battle sequences à la *X-COM* and you'll get a good idea of *Oidium*. The story is set in a European city populated by UN soldiers and an amazing variety of monsters. Curiously compelling.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 0181 944 9000

NOX

PCZ #87 • 72%

NEWENTRY This *Diablo*-style RPG is immensely addictive. The levels are repetitive but persistence pays off in the form of great spells and weapons. Watch out for a massive multiplayer community spawning around this one.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

LANDS OF LORE III

PCZ #74 • 80%

★ Westwood knows how to tell a good story, and this latest title in the series is certainly the best of the lot. Combine that with ease of use and some highly polished artwork, and you'll find *LOLIII* a great alternative to more traditional RPG efforts.

PUBLISHER Westwood/EA • 01753 549442

ACTION/ADVENTURES

GRIM FANDANGO

BENCHMARK
GAME

PCZ #71 • 90%

★ If you've followed the successes of LucasArts from the early days of *Monkey Island*, *Sam & Max* and *Day Of The Tentacle*, this is a must-buy. Sublime graphics and genuine humour ensure it's a classic. A word of warning: it's bloody hard and if your mind doesn't work laterally you'll be playing it until the day you die.

PUBLISHER LucasArts • 0171 368 2255

DISC WORLD NOIR

PCZ #79 • 89%

★ Although the point-and-click adventure genre is dying, *Discworld Noir* is very much alive. It's darker in style than previous *Discworld* games, and is all the better for it in our opinion, particularly if you're not a fan of Pratchett's off-the-wall humour. Don't miss it.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791

INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE

PCZ #84 • 88%

★ LucasArts moves away from the point-and-click genre and into *Tomb Raider* territory for the latest Indy outing. Thankfully the adventure elements are still in place in this whip-cracking romp.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456 7000

THE NOMAD SOUL

PCZ #83 • 87%

★ Distinctly odd, but also refreshingly original, *The Nomad Soul* is a huge, intricate world populated by lap-dancers and (gulp) David Bowie. At turns adventure, beat 'em up and platformer, it's insanely ambitious and almost pulls it off.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 0181 636 3000

NOCTURNE

PCZ #84 • 86%

★ Why would you pay good money to be scared? Because it's damn good fun that's why, and if you find the average PC game laughable, we dare you to sit through *Nocturne* with your curtains drawn. It's a beautiful exercise in computer-generated fear.

PUBLISHER Take 2 • 01753 722 900

MESSIAH

PCZ #85 • 85%

Shiny's wonderful shooter features a chubby cherub, but also whores and gratuitous swearing. As Bob, under-age agent of God, you must possess people's bodies and, like a good Christian, kill absolutely everything that gets in your way.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION

PCZ #83 • 85%

★ Lara's back in her fourth (and best) adventure so far. More moves, better looks, intricate puzzles and a well-developed plot. It's not going to win over the cynics, but it's still a damn fine game.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000

RESIDENT EVIL II

PCZ #75 • 82%

★ Not quite as attractive as it could have been, *Resident Evil II* remains one of the most tensely gripping adventure games of recent years. A modicum of simple puzzles, offset by liberal and gratuitous gore make for top entertainment.

PUBLISHER Virgin • 0171 368 2255

MONKEY ISLAND BOUNTY PACK

PCZ #74 • 80%

★ *Monkey Island 1* and *2* are perhaps the finest point-and-clickers ever to grace the PC. The third outing may have been disappointing, but it would be a sin to exclude it from this excellent triple pack.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01985 456 7000

SAM & MAX AND DAY OF THE TENTACLE

NOT REVIEWED • 78%

★ Two of the finest adventure games in the world ever are now available in a single pack for a bargain price. They still match most titles that are released today so go and buy them. Now.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01985 456 7000

RACING GAMES

COLIN MCRAE RALLY

BENCHMARK GAME



BUDGET

PCZ #68 • 91%

✦ Sporting an updated TOCA engine, *Colin McRae* is still the benchmark in rally simulations. It boasts realistic handling, car customisation and stacks of multiplayer options, which all contribute to keeping it well ahead of the competition. The fact that it's now available as a budget title makes it an absolute steal.

PUBLISHER Codemasters
• 01926 814132



MIDTOWN MADNESS

PCZ #79 • 89%

✦ Jump in your car and drive around Chicago participating in races, annoying the police, or just cruising around. Not quite *Grand Theft Auto 3D*, but just as much fun, this is definitely the best all-out arcade racer you can currently buy on PC.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



MOTOCROSS MADNESS

PCZ #67 • 85%

✦ This is an astoundingly addictive game. It boasts loads of game and race options and is tremendous fun, especially when played with a Microsoft Freestyle Pro pad over a network. If you want to have fun on two wheels, this is an absolute must-buy.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



LE MANS 24 HOURS

PCZ #87 • 83%

Although not quite as challenging as the race it's based on, *Le Mans 24 Hours* is a driving game for skilful players who know their brakes from their elbows. You can even get involved in a rewarding career mode culminating in the famous race itself.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 0181 738 8199



RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

PCZ #84 • 82%

✦ Close, but no *McRae*. That was the verdict from the boy Hill on this new racer. It looks fantastic and the on-screen Ordnance Survey map is a nice touch, but it's let down by some poor camera angles and unnecessarily solid obstacles. Ouch.

PUBLISHER Actualise • 01625 855015



TOCA 2

PCZ #76 • 82%

✦ Predictably, Codemasters have gone and done it again. More cars, more tracks and the same stunning attention to detail make *TOCA 2* an essential purchase for petrol heads. Graphically, it may not be a massive improvement, but gameplay-wise it most certainly is.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132



MONACO GRAND PRIX

PCZ #69 • 81%

✦ Essentially this is *F1 Racing Simulation 2*, and an F1 fan's wet dream come true. The game looks beautiful, plays even better, and the Artificial Intelligence is second to none. However, bear in mind that you need a hefty machine to have it looking its best.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 0181 944 9000



DRIVER

PCZ #82 • 80%

✦ Criticised for lacking the depth of *Midtown Madness* (it is a PlayStation conversion after all), this is still a good game. A pumping '70s soundtrack helps to recreate that 'Starsky And Hutch' feeling. A wheel, an afro haircut and a false moustache are, of course, essential.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791



SEGA RALLY 2

PCZ #84 • 79%

✦ Not as good as hooking up with five of your mates down the local arcade, but this is a damn good conversion of a damn fine game. Forget realism and concentrate on flinging your car round the track as fast as you can. Who needs depth when racing is this much fun?

PUBLISHER Sega • 0181 995 3399



CARMAGEDDON II

PCZ #69 • 77%

✦ It's *that* game again, this time with full 3D pedestrians. The sequel offers more blood, more cars, more tracks – and now with a selection of added missions. If you liked the first game, you'll love this one. If you don't, you can just bog off.

PUBLISHER SCI • 0171 585 3308

FLIGHT SIMULATORS

FALCON 4

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #72 • 92%

✦ We waited patiently for years for this title to arrive, and the good news is that for once we weren't disappointed. *Falcon 4* sports beautiful 3D-accelerated graphics and a dynamic campaign structure that leaves the competition well and truly standing. If you're going to buy one flight sim, make it this one – it's the best example of its kind and we guarantee that you won't be disappointed.

PUBLISHER MicroProse
• 01454 893893



BUDGET

F-22 TOTAL AIR WAR

PCZ #68 • 89%

✦ This full-price new version of DID's masterpiece seems perhaps a bit of a rip-off for anyone who already owns *F-22 ADF*, but those of you who are looking to buy one of the greatest combat sims of recent years should seriously consider this title.

PUBLISHER Ocean/DID • 0161 832 6633



F/A 18E SUPER HORNET

PCZ #83 • 88%

✦ If you like your flight sims to be realistic with a great, big, capital 'R', then look no further. In fact this game is so lifelike that the US Navy have adopted it for promotional work and ground-based familiarity training. But make sure you watch out for friendly fire.

PUBLISHER Titus Software • 0171 700 2119



MIG ALLEY

PCZ #80 • 87%

✦ *Mig Alley* gives hardcore flight simmers' piloting skills a run for their money, but don't let that put off. If you're willing to put in the work, this title will repay you with a wealth of excellent in-flight graphics and a selection of brilliant mission planning elements.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337



BUDGET

APACHE HAVOC

PCZ #73 • 85%

✦ Of the three main chopper sims available, *Longbow 2* is the one to go for if you're a hard-core sim head, *Team Apache* is the choice for fans whose preference swings the other way, and *Apache Havoc* straddles the gap. As for the graphics, they are just to die for.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337



FLIGHT UNLIMITED III

PCZ #82 • 86%

✦ For all those sim aficionados who enjoy the experience of flying for its own sake rather than as a lame excuse for blasting other flying things to bits, this is (along with the *Flight Sim* series) an object of worship and devotion. It certainly deserves high praise.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



FLANKER 2.0

PCZ #85 • 86%

Hardcore pilots with a taste for Yank blood need look no further. Extremely hard to fly, but very rewarding nevertheless, *Flanker 2.0* recreates the real thing in minute detail. However, be warned: hours of practice are needed before you go off shooting stuff.

PUBLISHER SSI • 01293 651300



TEAM ALLIGATOR

PCZ #85 • 84%

Helicopter sims are rare but, when they appear on the scene, they are usually superb. Although *Team Alligator* doesn't quite surpass the cheaper *Apache/Havoc*, it has truly beautiful graphics and feels great to fly. Without doubt, the best Russian chopper sim around.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791



FLIGHT SIM 2000

PCZ #85 • 80%

Although not a huge step forward from *Flight Sim 98*, it's still the choice of millions of high-flyers. There is a price to pay for its incredible looks, however – you'll need a giant NASA PC to run the thing. Expect a load of meaty expansion packs to follow.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



JANE'S WORLD WAR II FIGHTERS

PCZ #72 • 83%

✦ It's been a fierce dogfight to see who rules the WWII flight sim skies. *Jane's World War II Fighters* combines realism with accessibility and ease and, although the game doesn't have a dynamic campaign feature, its graphics make it a clear winner.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

SPORTS

FIFA 2000

**PCZ #84 • 88%**

★ The FIFA franchise has been rolling on for years and it certainly gets better each time. Although it missed a classic rating by a whisker, *FIFA 2000* is still the best conversion of the finest sport known to man. If you're into your football, then what are you waiting for? You should own a copy of *FIFA 2000*. It's as simple as that.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
• 01753 549442

**SUPREME SNOWBOARDING****PCZ #85 • 86%**

Snowboarding is not a sport you'd expect to captivate a PC audience, but this game gives as exhilarating an experience as you could hope for without breaking a leg. Oh, and all the streetwise attitude you'd expect is here, of course.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 0181 738 8199**NBA LIVE 2000****PCZ #85 • 83%**

As slick as always, but what makes the 2K edition special is the inclusion of teams from the 1950s onwards, comedy haircuts *et al*. Although not quite as immediate as *Inside Drive*, it's a more complete simulation of the sport all round.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442**NBA: INSIDE DRIVE****PCZ #82 • 82%**

★ While not exactly the most popular sport in this country, *Inside Drive* manages to suck you in with its supreme playability. Its presentation is not quite up to EA standards (but then, what is?), but when the gameplay is this good, who cares?

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000**PGA CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF****PCZ #80 • 82%**

★ Knocking *Links* off the office golfing perch is no mean feat, but *PGA's* gameplay is so addictive that all other contenders can tee off. Our very own Keith Pullin took the entire summer off to design his own courses for it. But he has got a hole in one in the head.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100**BUDGET****VIRTUAL POOL 2****PCZ #58 • 82%**

★ OK, so *Virtual Pool 2* scored one per cent less than its predecessor, but this follow-up beats it hands down. 3dfx support goes some way to pushing the series further, and the inclusion of English Pub rules make it a more essential purchase than before.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666**JIMMY WHITE'S CUEBALL 2****PCZ #68 • 81%**

★ The finest snooker simulation on the PC. Chalk your cue and take on the PC or your mates, and when you're tired of the baize you can move round and have a go on the fully-featured darts board instead. Saves going down the Working Men's Club.

PUBLISHER Virgin Interactive • 0171 368 2255**ACTUA SOCCER 3****PCZ #72 • 80%**

★ If you can't get on with *FIFA*, then *Actua* is the second port of call for footie fans. It plays a faster game and there's a good range of options and a huge number of teams to play against, which helps to maintain its shelf life.

PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601**BRIAN LARA CRICKET****PCZ #75 • 78%**

★ Cricket isn't the easiest game to convert to the PC but Codemasters have done the best job, despite the fact that *Brian Lara Cricket* has obviously been ported straight over from the PlayStation. For aspiring country-dwellers everywhere.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132**NHL 2000****PCZ #83 • 77%**

★ EA's hockey series has improved graphics and Artificial Intelligence, fast-paced addictive gameplay and you can now graft your digitised face onto a player, then watch it beaten with a stick to a bloody pulp. Now that's family entertainment.

PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

SPACE COMBAT

X - BEYOND THE FRONTIER

**BENCHMARK GAME****PCZ #82 • 89%**

★ The spirit of *Elite* lives on in this massive trading epic from Germany where you must buy and fight your way back home to Earth. The combat side of the gameplay may not be the best on offer, but with goods to trade and races to discover, it rewards patience with variety and months of play. This title is deeply hypnotic and beautiful, rather than tense and frenetic.

PUBLISHER THQ • 01483 767656**FREESPACE 2****PCZ #84 • 85%**

★ Completely different from *X*, *FreeSpace 2* offers fast-paced dogfighting action all the way. It boasts a superb interface, epic story and amazing graphics, but it's a bit short-lived if you don't play online.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 0171 551 4222**X-WING: ALLIANCE****PCZ #77 • 83%**

★ At last! Fly the Millennium Falcon in the final episode in the long-running *X-Wing* series. Certainly the best-looking *X-Wing* game to date, *Alliance* is slow at first, but boy does it pick up later on.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700**BUDGET****PRIVATEER 2****PCZ #44 • 80%**

★ Not as open-ended as *Elite*, but far more rewarding as an overall experience. The graphics look great even today, and hey it's on budget so it's better value for money than ever.

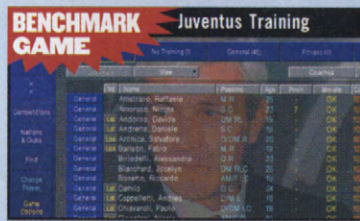
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442**BUDGET****WING COMMANDER PROPHECY GOLD****PCZ #59 • 77%**

★ The graphics look a bit dated now, but this is still a great game by anyone's standards. *Wing* neophytes start here.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

MANAGEMENT

CM 99/2000

**BENCHMARK GAME**

Juventus Training

PCZ #84 • 92%

★ More than a game... it's a way of life. So say fans of the best football management game in existence. If you dare to play it you can kiss goodbye to your social life, and expect to spend hours each and every day poring over unknown players in a bid to discover the next Ronaldo. The word 'benchmark' doesn't really describe how much better than the competition this game is.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 0181 636 3000**THE SIMS****PCZ #87 • 86%**

NEWENTRY The Sims offers so many possibilities that it's staggering. Create your own person, or family, and guide them through the ups and downs of life – it's the definitive docu-soap.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442**CAESAR III****PCZ #70 • 85%**

★ Starting from scratch you've got to build a majestic Roman city and ensure a harmonious life for your citizens. So what? So it's utterly absorbing and probably the most addictive god sim in existence.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100**SIMCITY 3000****PCZ #74 • 84%**

★ Ten years on, *SimCity* remains as addictive as it ever was. Little was broken, and little was fixed. With new buildings to try out and an enhanced transport system, *SimCity 3000* is a must for old-timers and newbies alike.

PUBLISHER Maxis/EA • 01753 549442**ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON****PCZ #75 • 83%**

★ Pack out your own theme park with the most fiendish rides your imagination can conjure up. From rickety wooden 'dippers, to Nemesis-style, white-knuckle gurners, *RT* is hugely addictive.

PUBLISHER Hasbro • 0181 569 1234

ONLINE ONLY

ULTIMA ONLINE



PCZ #80 • 92%

✦ In many ways an old-school RPG, but with amazing freedom, depth and open-endedness. So addictive that *ZONE* editor Chris has sold his car, his house and his soul to finance a permanent Web connection. The best thing about *Ultima Online* is that your world is constantly changing and evolving, and it's populated by real people, just like you.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



EVERQUEST

PCZ #80 • 85%

✦ If you find *Ultima Online* too vast, *EverQuest* may be the online RPG for you. It's far more combat-orientated than *Ultima*, and more linear as a result. Repetitive at higher levels but worth checking out all the same.

PUBLISHER Sony (sold at Electronic Boutique only) • 0171 428 5961



NETSTORM

PCZ #59 • 73%

✦ A curious blend of chess, *Red Alert* and Baron Munchausen, *NetStorm* is also an elegant and addictive multiplayer game that works beautifully across a standard modem.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



WARBIRDS

PCZ #70 • 72%

✦ The original WWII online dogfighting sim and still one of the best. With over 48 different aircraft to choose from, this should keep anyone with a passing interest in air combat very happy indeed.

PUBLISHER Interactive Magic • 01344 409399



DAWN OF ACES

PCZ #77 • 60%

✦ Not entirely dissimilar to *Warbirds*, but set in WWI. It's not as fast or as hectic, which some might say is a good thing. We happen to like our action hectic and that's why we gave *Dawn* a lower score. That's life, bud.

PUBLISHER Interactive Magic • 01344 409399

3D ACTION/STRATEGY

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS



PCZ #79 • 91%

✦ You don't get a second chance in a real war, and *Hidden & Dangerous* is the game that's come closest to putting you in the middle of hell on earth. From the very first mission, it grabs you by the balls and doesn't let up until you're dead, with a bullet in the head. As a strategic shoot 'em up, games don't get any harder, or more compelling and atmospheric.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900



SWAT 3

PCZ #85 • 89%

Artificial intelligence doesn't get any better than *SWAT 3*'s. Add to this some spectacular graphics, an ingenious command interface and edge-of-your-seat gameplay, and you've got a top title.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100



BATTLEZONE 2

PCZ #84 • 87%

✦ Stunning graphics and a winning blend of strategy and first-person action in this sequel to the highly acclaimed *Battlezone*. The fight for world domination has never looked so good.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



ROGUE SPEAR

PCZ #84 • 86%

✦ We loved *Rainbow Six* and although this follow-up can't match *Hidden & Dangerous* for intensity, it's a superb romp through the world of terrorism. Pick your team, kit them out and plan your missions carefully.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900



SPEC OPS 2

PCZ #84 • 84%

✦ Challenging *Hidden & Dangerous* for the top spot, *Spec Ops 2* puts you in charge of a four-man green beret squad intent on staying alive and shooting the enemy in the head. Incredibly realistic, with top-notch sound.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900

PCZONE ALL-TIME CLASSICS



DOOM

✦ This is the game that needs no introduction. Without *Doom* we wouldn't have had *Quake*, *Unreal Tournament* or (gulp) *Half-Life*. Every time you play a first-person shooter you should take five minutes to pay homage to the game that changed the world as we know it. *Doom*, we thank you.



ULTIMA VII

✦ Still the best of all the *Ultima* games, and probably the finest RPG ever seen on a PC. The graphics might be old-hat, but the gameplay certainly isn't. *Ultima VII* blends exploration and character interaction, and it's the last title in the *Ultima* series to give complete party control.



ULTIMA UNDERWORLD

✦ We reviewed this game back in the very first issue of *PC ZONE*. It was a landmark RPG then and it's still a landmark RPG now, although the graphics obviously look a bit dated. Do we think it's the best RPG ever? Almost, but not quite. Cast your eyes up the mag a couple of inches for the answer to that question.



DUNE II

✦ If you know your strategy, you'll know that *Dune II* is the game that's done more to define the genre as we know it today. The 2000 update was disappointing, but only because it didn't add anything new. The fact that it still plays better than many new titles is testament to its staying power.



SENSIBLE WORLD OF SOCCER

✦ EA's *FIFA* series might look the part, but we're convinced that *Sensible Soccer* was and is the ultimate example of gameplay over presentation. With its famous top-down view, *Sensible* offers fast frantic action that does more to replicate the real-life game than any of its predecessors.



UFO: ENEMY UNKNOWN

✦ This game came out of nowhere and took the world by storm. Compelling strategy, tense turn-based battles, and a myriad of research options made this the most addictive game ever on its arrival. Subsequent sequels were just as addictive, but this is the game that originally captured our hearts.



MAGIC CARPET

✦ Drawing gasps of amazement from everyone who saw it, Bullfrog's *Magic Carpet* was one of the most original and inventive games released in the early days of 3D. So original, in fact, that it never got the recognition it deserved. We still think the blend of action and strategy was spot-on.



WING COMMANDER

✦ The original space combat game spawned the first big-budget PC series. In fact, the *Wing Commander* series was so hugely successful that they went and made a film. Inevitably, this was absolute rubbish and people stayed away in their millions. Will these people ever learn?



TOMB RAIDER

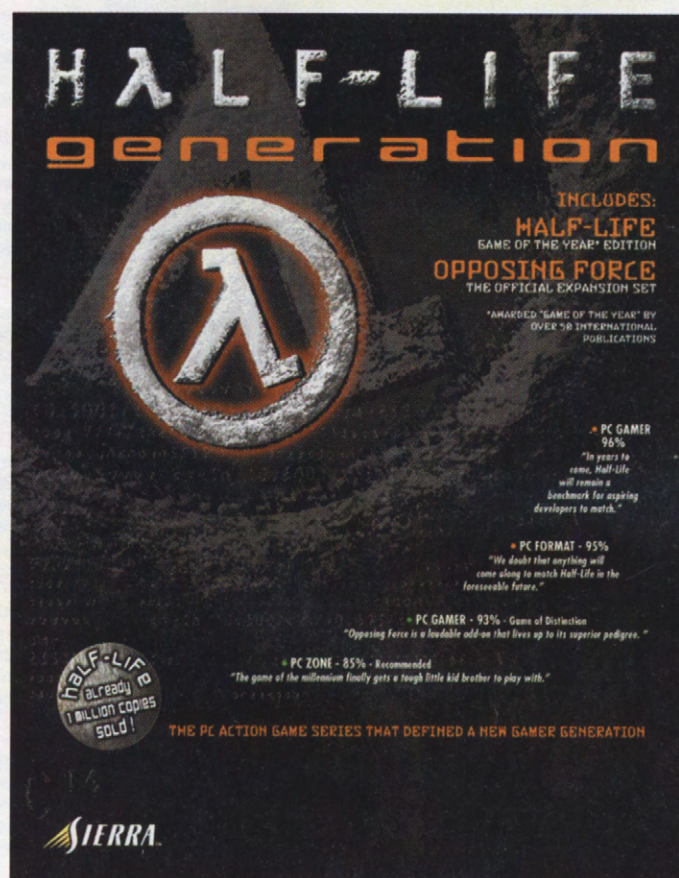
✦ She might be getting a bit rusty round the gills, but when Lara first bounced onto the small screen we fell in love with her instantly. 3D action adventure games haven't been the same since and at the time nothing could touch it. Do you remember your first encounter with the T-Rex?



CIVILIZATION

✦ The original and some say the best turn-based strategy game. When *Civilization* first appeared, it was hailed correctly as the first game that changed and evolved depending on how you played it. Recent versions have presented more of the same, but in this case that is definitely no bad thing.

half-life generation is the definitive collection



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**UPDATED
DAILY AT
3.30PM**

ON THE CD

This month there's a distinct RTS theme to our first cover disc, kicking off with the incredible *Shogun*. Enjoy...

★ WORDSMITH: Martin Korda SOFTWARE JUNKIE: Daniel Emery

HELP!

CD trouble? Don't worry – phone our helpline and sort yourself out pronto!

CD-ROM HELP Phone ABT on 01708 250250 any weekday between 9.30am and 5pm, and Saturday from 10am to 2pm, or email pczone@abt-net.demon.co.uk. Please do NOT phone the PC ZONE office. Thanks.

BEFORE YOU DIAL... If you are calling the helpline, please take note of the following points:

- ★ If possible, have your PC operating and near the phone when you call.
- ★ If this is not possible, note down all relevant information – ie system type, sound card, RAM and so on – plus the nature of the fault.
- ★ Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call so you can jot down the relevant info.

MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

- ★ You need at least a Pentium 133 with 16Mb RAM to run the software on this month's CD-ROM.
- ★ Many of the programs on our cover CD-ROM are designed to run under Windows 95 and, as a result, some of them may require a Pentium 166 with 32Mb RAM to run satisfactorily. Please note that some games also require a 3D accelerator card to run.
- ★ Use the browser and menu system to see which demos are Windows 95, DOS and 3D accelerator only.



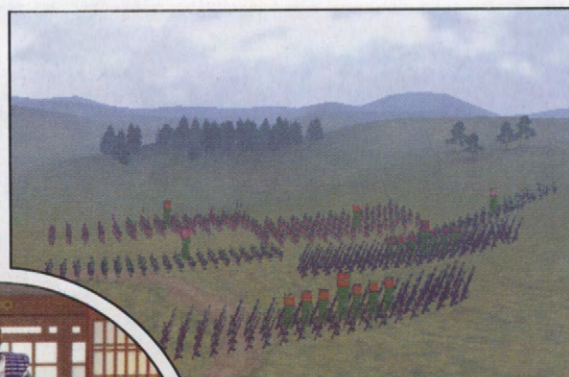
DEMOS + SHAREWARE

SHOGUN – TOTAL WAR

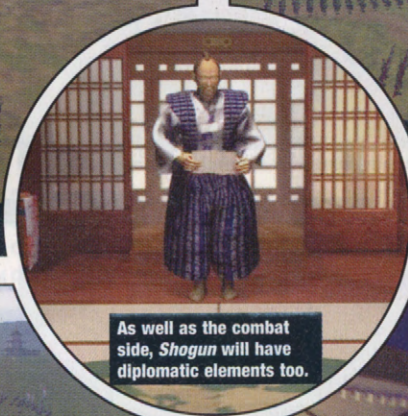
ELECTRONIC ARTS



Before you jump into a battle, you must first learn how to command your troops.



Formations and terrain advantage are two important factors in battles such as this one.



As well as the combat side, *Shogun* will have diplomatic elements too.



Total carnage.



Send assassins to remove your enemies from power.

**FOR DETAILS
ON THE
SECOND
DISC SEE
EXTENDED
PLAY ON
PAGE 154**

This is one of the most spectacular demos we've ever featured on the PC ZONE demo disc. Set in ancient Japan, *Shogun* is an RTS with a difference. Rendered in full 3D and with spectacular backdrops, the game is true to its word when it claims it's total war. We haven't been this excited about a war game since the time we cast our eyes over the original *Command & Conquer* and, if this superb tutorial based demo is anything to go by, the end product could well wipe the floor with the opposition.

The tutorial is divided into four parts, enabling you to learn and practise the intricacies of combat and tactics. The first two, Basic Training and Combat Training, teach you how to move, group and order your troops. Things start to hot up in part three,

First Encounter, when you finally get to confront an opposing army. Finally, in the Learn From The Past section, you are charged with commanding a far larger body of men, against equally formidable opposition. As if all of this wasn't enough to get you in the mood for the forthcoming full release, there's a rolling demo too. It explains the other features that will be present in the final package, as well as reminding us that the armies commanded in this tutorial are small in comparison to the ones in the finished game. If this is just a hint of what's to come, then all existing RTS games can quite simply roll over and die, which may well happen pretty soon as we'll hopefully get the review code in time for the next issue.





← THEOCRACY

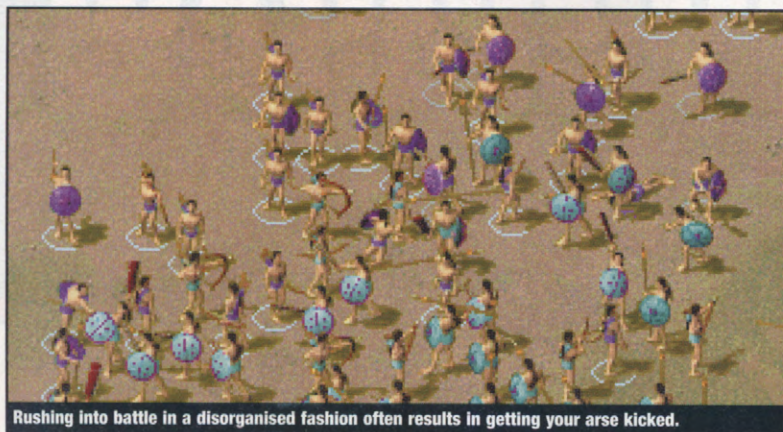
UBI SOFT

Combining the RTS combat of *Age Of Empires II* with the depth of gameplay of *Civilization II*, *Theocracy* has proved to be one of the surprise packages of 2000. Take control of an Aztec tribe and attempt to unite all the others, in order to fend off the Spanish invaders. With great graphics and sound, as well as open-ended gameplay, this is one of the best RTS games currently available.

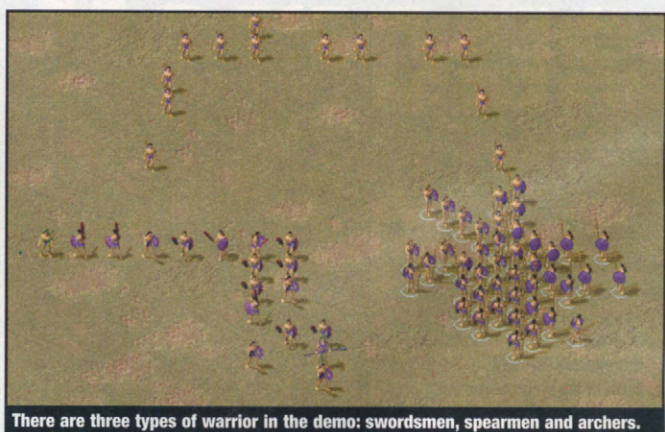
The demo provides you with three of the Chronicle missions, which are individual scenarios based on Aztec legends. In these missions you can practise your leadership skills before moving onto the main part of the game (not included on the demo). The Commander and The Hero let you get to grips with commanding an army and utilising formations, while the Captain sets you the task of defending and supporting a single province for ten years.

The three missions are an excellent taster of the whole game, and should familiarise you with some of the intricacies of *Theocracy*, as well as providing lots of fun along the way. If nothing else, this is a refreshing chance to recreate a civilisation rarely represented in PC games and hopefully right the historical wrongs inflicted by the so-called civilised Spanish colonists. You can read the full review on page 72.

Clubbing was a popular Aztec pastime.



Rushing into battle in a disorganised fashion often results in getting your arse kicked.



There are three types of warrior in the demo: swordsmen, spearmen and archers.

Tiberian Sun features a host of futuristic weaponry.

To repair a bridge select an engineer, and send it into the bridge hut.



The lights are on, but no one's home.

COMMAND & CONQUER: TIBERIAN SUN

ELECTRONIC ARTS

The third in the excellent *Command & Conquer* series, *Tiberian Sun* picks up several years after the conclusion of the original *C&C* game.

Kane, the leader of terrorist organisation Nod, reappears from the grave to lead his men against the world's peacekeepers GDI. How will the mystery of the alien mineral Tiberian unfold and can the maniac Kane harness its untapped powers?

On the cover disc we're giving you two missions, where you must take command of the GDI forces and take out the NOD bases. The first mission gives you several units which must storm a NOD stronghold, but reinforcements will be sent to help you. The second task allows you to build your own base, with total annihilation of all enemy units and buildings being the objective. Fast-paced, action-packed and boasting a host of futuristic weaponry, the demo manages to recreate the full game's atmosphere and playability. It may have taken an age to arrive but we're sure you'll find that the wait has been worthwhile.

MULTIPLAYER ONLY



Monza, one of the fastest circuits in the world.



Biking is so exhausting.

SUPERBIKE 2000

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Without a doubt, this has taken over from its predecessor, *Superbike World Championship*, as the motorbike game to own on the PC. With improved graphics, a great sense of speed and intelligent computer opponents, there's fun to be had for

bike and arcade fans alike. We've put Monza, one of the world's fastest circuits, on the CD, so that you can experience the thrills of this high-speed riding game. If you like what you see, then you can read our full review of the game on page 80.

Up Cursor Accelerate
Down Cursor Brake
Left Cursor Turn left
Right Cursor Turn right

EDGAR TORRENTERAS' EXTREME BIKER

SIERRA

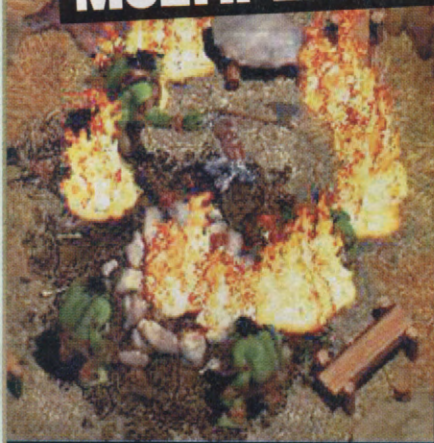
Back in issue 84, we gave *ETEB* a cool 54 per cent. Harsh? Well, here's a chance to find out for yourself. Replicate stunts performed by the up-and-coming Torrenteras, while racing around the Forest Glade track. To be the best, you have to learn from the best, and this is possible by watching one of the two replays of Edgar himself. He flips and jumps over the High One and Badlands circuits, showing off his undeniable skills. Your task to attain motocross perfection will be made easier by the three difficulty levels available. You'll soon be jumping for joy as you manage your first successful somersault. Woohoo!

Right Shift Accelerate
Right Control Brake
Left Left cursor
Right Right cursor
Up Cursor Lean forward
Down Cursor Wheelie
Semi-Colon Stunt A
Apostrophe Stunt B

Fancy meeting you up here.



MULTIPLAYER ONLY



Pray to the giant cauliflower cheese.



I want to be a tree.

NOX

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Following on from its success with *Tiberian Sun*, Westwood has moved from RTS to RPG. Set in a fantasy land, full of foul creatures and warriors, *Nox* offers a wealth of playability and action. This demo gives you some great multi-player fun, plunging you and your friends straight into the hack 'n' slash and spell-casting action. You can play the conjurer character, but the full game allows two more choices – wizards and warriors. May the best conjurer win.



PATCHES

All the latest patches for all your favourite games. For explanations of what each one does, see the CD browser

WarBirds 2.75

Jane's USAF v1.02

Starsiege TRIBES v1.0 to 1.10

Starsiege TRIBES v1.9 to 1.10

Starsiege TRIBES v1.91 to 1.10

Drakan Patch Build 445

Ultima Ascension v1.18F

Madden NFL 2000 Patch 4

Age Of Wonders v1.31

Hype – The Time Quest

Grand Theft Auto 2 v1.03

Nocturne Patch

Planescape Torment v1.1

C&C: Tiberian Sun v1.17

SWAT 3 Close Quarters Battle v1.1

Phoenix v1.1

Wheel Of Time 333b Patch

Driver v2.1

Quake III Arena Point Release

Age Of Empires v1.0c



ONLINE

Now the Net can be even more accessible if you use one of the following nifty programs...

GameSpy v2.18

Fire it up and it'll find the fastest servers playing all your favourite games

NeoTrace 2.12

NeoTrace is a high-speed graphical traceroute with integrated whois and ping

PingTool 2.6a

PingTool helps you find the best online game servers on the Internet

FreeUK

Sign up files for this free ISP

DUN Manager 1.2c

Simplify and enhance Dial-Up Networking and Remote

Access Services

FTP Explorer 1.0010

Explorer-style FTP interface

GetRight 4.1.2

Salvages broken downloads and more

MIRC 5.61

Latest version of the Internet Chat software

Mplayer

Excellent free online gaming software

Kali95 1.68

Useful client software for playing games over the Internet

ICQ ver99b v3.19 beta Build #2569

World's best Internet and online chat package

Roger Wilco Mk1.1a

A virtual walkie-talkie app that runs alongside your favourite multiplayer and online games



ON THE CD UTILITIES

It's not all fun and games. Your PC needs these helpful utilities as well

WinZip 7.00 SR-1

Windows 95 and NT version of WinZip

EzDesk 1.8

Saves the position of your Desktop shortcuts and folders

PowerToys

Useful add-on for your Desktop

TreeSize Professional v2.2

A powerful and flexible hard disk space manager

Adobe Acrobat Reader 4.05

Reader for documents

distributed in Adobe Acrobat format

Hypersnap-DX Pro 3.52.00 (new version!)

Screen-capture even in DirectX/Direct3D or 3dfx

Glide modes

SciTech Display Doctor v6.53

The latest release of the universal graphics card utility

Windows Media Player

Play the Web's coolest audio and video with Windows Media Player



EDITORIAL

Sneak peaks at a few forthcoming games, a config file and a CM3 update

Tomb Raider IV Config File

Config file for the Microsoft SideWinder Dual Strike gamepad

Championship Manager 3 Update (new version)

Latest transfers, updates and all the rest

Hot Shots:

Ground Control

Take a sneak peak at *Ground Control*

Rune

First look at *Rune*

Evolva

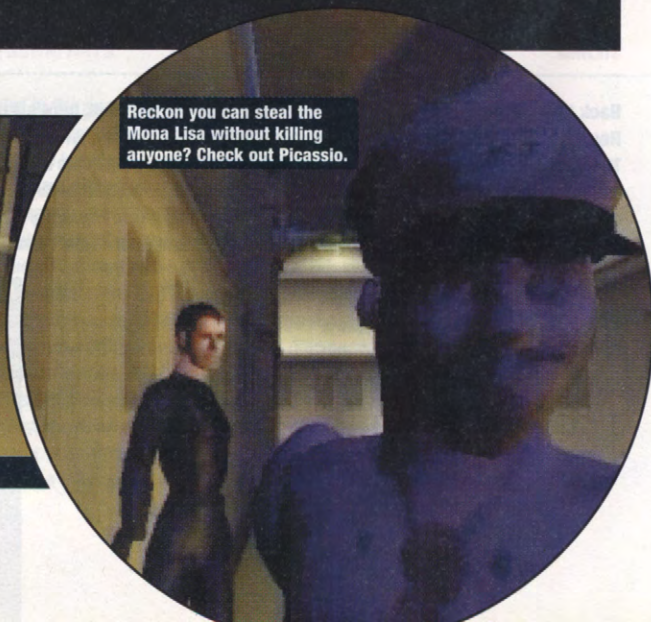
First glimpse of *Evolva*

Picassio

First glance of *Picassio*



No sign of cubist beauties around here then.





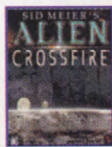
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EXTENDED PLAY



Not just one disc but two. More *Unreal Tournament*, *Quake III* and *Half-Life* levels and add-ons than you could shake a very big stick at

★ **DRILL SERGEANT** Martin Korda **DISC OFFICER** Dan Emery

TRY IT YOURSELF



On this month's cover CD we've got all the official patches, bug fixes, utilities and map editors we could find, including all the ones mentioned in these pages. To track them down, use the CD browser to go to the Patches section. All the patches are listed with a brief description and any relevant documentation. Make sure you read any associated README files for information on how to install individual patches. For further help, turn to our CD pages, starting on page 149.

“Now, nearly a year and a half after its initial release, *Half-Life* still holds the highest score of any game in our Top 100, showing just how great a game it is”

UNREAL TOURNAMENT GT Interactive

Recently voted as the best first-person shooter in our Supertest, *Unreal Tournament* is one of those games which you can play over and over again without ever growing tired of. If you've grown too accustomed to the levels provided by the game, then fear not. On the CD are over 250 new ones to get to grips with. There's loads of CTF, Deathmatch, Domination and Assault fun here, which should keep even the greatest *UT* player occupied for weeks on end.

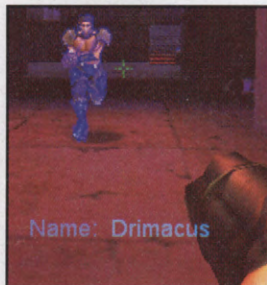
We've been busily testing out the levels (purely in the name of research you understand), and we have to admit that we've been pretty impressed by what we've seen. As ever, we've got our favourites and believe that these deserve a special mention.

★ AMEN

With its large open spaces, coupled with narrow corridors and spiral staircases, this is the pick of the Deathmatch levels. It offers few places to hide, yet because it's set on several levels, it makes sniping positions readily available.



Redeemer: look how beautiful this level is...



① There's always plenty of prey in the level Amen.

★ REDEEMER

One of the top CTF levels is Redeemer, which as you expect has several Redeemers available to you. The level looks superb and is relatively small, allowing huge amounts of carnage – it's especially fun if you turn on friendly fire. Using a Redeemer suddenly becomes a far more calculated affair when you can kill your own team.

★ SOLSTICE

Solstice gets the thumbs up from us in terms of Assault levels. You and your team must storm a fort surrounded by a moat. The narrow underground tunnels and large open caves leave very few places to find cover.



① She's deserting – what are you waiting for? Quick, shoot her.

★ TERROR

Finally, we have the Domination levels. Many people often overlook this part of the game, but some of the levels here could well help to remedy this aversion. By far the best, is the superb Terror. Anyone who has ever seen the Bruce Lee classic *Enter the Dragon* will be familiar with the

hall of mirrors scene. Terror has its own room of mirrors, and we guarantee you'll start shooting at your own reflections. Not only that, but each of the three domination areas is protected by mounted machine guns, making your life even harder.



① The hall of mirrors makes it doubly hard to avoid the Terror.

QUAKE III ARENA Activision

If it's pure adrenaline-paced action that you're after, then *Quake III Arena* is the one for you. Only narrowly missing out on a 'Classic' award, *QIII* requires faster reactions than *UT*, giving you less time to think. Again, there are some real crackers level-wise. Here's our pick of some of the best ones:

★ Q2DM1

Does this name ring a bell? Well, it's possibly the most famous and widely played Deathmatch level of *Quake II*, and it's now been

converted to *Quake III*. With improved graphics, it's better now than it ever was, and still rates as probably the most balanced *Quake* Deathmatch level ever.

★ ADDICT

Addict is a simple level which provides plenty of sniping points, and portals to escape through. It looks beautiful too, possessing some superb curved architecture.



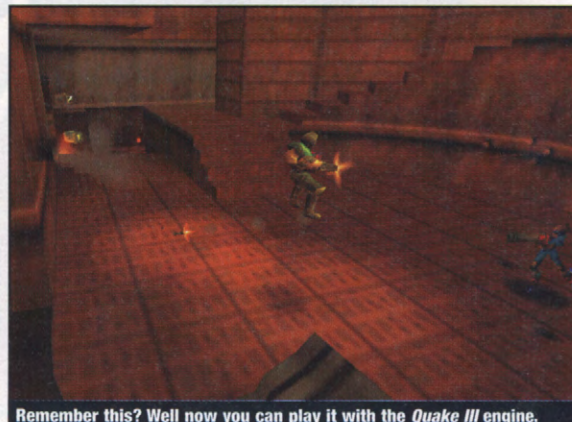
① Make sure you watch out. This level's addictive.

★ ANTILOGIC

If you're looking for a level that offers total carnage, then you can't go far wrong with Antilogic. Load in as many bots as you can or get all your mates to play, and watch a bloodbath unfold. Most of the level's doors lead into one big area, where sniping positions are rife and frags are frequent.



① Be warned: Antilogic can turn into a total bloodbath.



Remember this? Well now you can play it with the *Quake III* engine.

★ **GM MOSHPIT**

Contrary to what the name suggests, this level has nothing to do with Heavy Metal music, but plenty to do with jumping around. GM Moshpit is one large arena with lots of bounce and accelerator pads, which can throw you from one side of the room to the other in the blink of an eye.

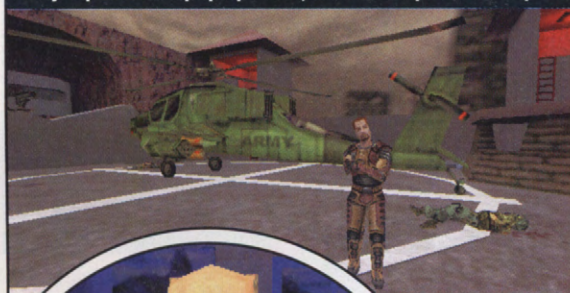


⚡ Jump around. Jump, jump, jump, jump!



There ain't enough room in this computer game for the both of us.

Plenty of places to snipe people from, and a helicopter to blow up.

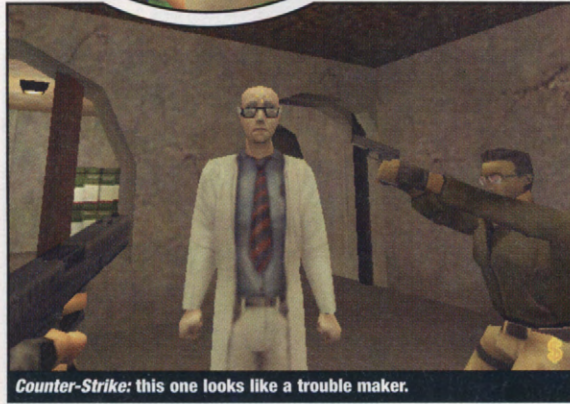
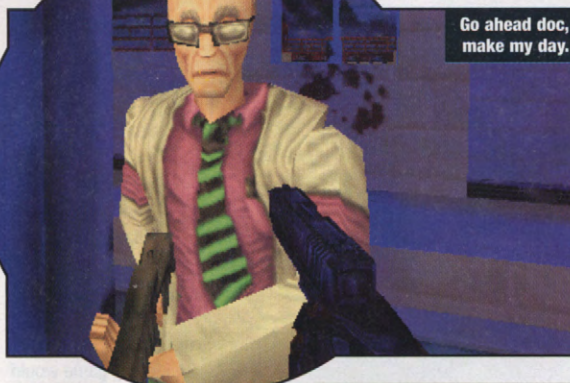


HALF-LIFE

Sierra

When it was released in 1998, no other game could touch it in terms of quality and depth. Now, nearly a year and a half after its initial release, *Half-Life* still holds the highest score of any game in our Top 100, showing just how great a game it is. Our disc has the full version of the excellent add-on *Counter Strike*, so that you can enjoy the *Half-Life* equivalent of 'capture the flag', by either saving the hostages or preventing their rescue.

There were several levels which particularly impressed us. Sniperville, Snarkpit, Wildwest and 3Way were just four of the *Half-Life* levels which we felt stood out. CS-Smuggle and CS-Tankbetap1 were the two *Counter-Strike* missions that we found particular enjoyable. The latter of these two demands specific attention, because it enables you to operate a tank and two huge mounted machine guns. Hard to use, but devastating if you hit the target. [K7]



Counter-Strike: this one looks like a trouble maker.

NEED SOME HELP

How to install the maps



If you need full instructions on installing the levels, go to the Readme files on the CD.

You can install the levels direct from the CD interface, or dip into Explorer and install them at your leisure. If you want to do this and you're not sure where to extract the files to, you can find full instructions in the Readme files on the CD. Many of the levels on the disc also have their own .txt files with instructions about how to install and run each one, and we recommend that you always read these first before installing any of them.

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

- .uax Move these to the Unreal Tournament Sounds directory
- .umx Move these to the Unreal Tournament Music directory
- .u Move these to the Unreal Tournament System directory
- .utx Move these files to the Unreal Tournament Textures directory

Any *UT* levels that you install into these folders will show up in the interface next time you launch the game. Simple, eh?

QUAKE III ARENA

Unless otherwise stated, all files should go in the *QIIIArena\baseq3* directory. Just fire up *Quake III*, bring the console down and type map xxx to load the individual level.

HALF-LIFE

.bsp files go into the *Sierra\Half-Life\Valve\Maps* directory

COUNTER-STRIKE

.bsp files go into the *Cstrike\Maps* directory
.wad files go into the *Cstrike\route* directory
As with *UT*, any additional *Half-Life* levels can be selected from the game interface. To launch *Counter-Strike* you need to select Custom Game.

WITHDRAWN



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WHAT'S ON YOUR HARD DRIVE?

PC ZONE braved the outside world to ask some of the real people what's hot and what's not...

★ WORDS/PHOTOS Craig Vaughan LOCATION Birmingham



NICK BLOWER
16, Student

What's on your hard drive?
"GTA 2, Championship Manager 1, 2 and 3 and Quake III Arena."
Don't like soccer games much then?
"I'm soccer mad - I have played them all in my time, I really love the escapism and scale of the challenge."
What's a game you would never touch?
"Tiberian Sun. It totally reeks. C&C was OK, I suppose, but the sequel is exactly the bloody same."



TREVOR MORRIS
17, Student

What's on your hard drive?
"Screamer 2, Screamer Rally, GTA 2, Carmageddon II and Unreal Tournament."
Have you passed your driving test yet?
"Who needs to when your PC lets you create virtual carnage and mayhem?"
Do you only play driving games?
"Mostly - I love mowing down pedestrians, or at the very least making them dodge out of the way screaming."



ALEX CLARKE
17, Student

What's on your hard drive?
"GTA 2, Quake III Arena, SimCity 2000 and Sam And Max."
Sam And Max?
"Yeah, I played it before, obviously, but it's still better than most of the half-adventure/half-Doom clones that you get these days. I'm messing with Quake III Arena to see if my machine will run it, but somehow I doubt it."
You never know...
"Yeah, right. The other one's got bells on."



MIKE JENKINSON
30, Musician

What's on your hard drive?
"SimCity 2000, Railway Tycoon, RollerCoaster Tycoon and Alpha Centauri."
Have you got dreams of senior management?
"No, I've got a PC that won't run new games. I'm upgrading soon, so I can put the PlayStation away and get on with some real games."
What will you buy then?
"A decent flight simulator - Flight Sim 2000 or Combat Flight Sim, I think. A good driving game would also do the trick."



LEE MURPHY
28, Rail staff

What's on your hard drive?
"FreeSpace 2, System Shock 2, Kingpin, MechWarrior 3, Half-Life."
Have you tried the mission packs for Half-Life?
"Yeah, I finished Opposing Force in eight hours. I'm just working my way through the conversion you gave away."
Redemption?
"Yeah, it looks the business. I can't believe it's a homemade job. Other than that, System Shock 2 is keeping me scared."



ALAN MURPHY
31, Psychiatric nurse

What's on your hard drive?
"Thief, Quake III, Heretic 2 and Unreal Tournament."
Stress relief?
"You don't know the half of it. I like to have a little play just to let off steam."
But what about the violence warping your mind?
"I'm not just into mass murder. I enjoy Thief-type games as well. I like them because they involve more than just murder and mayhem - you are forced to have a think, too."



ROBERT MURPHY
30, Nursing assistant

What's on your hard drive?
"FreeSpace 2, System Shock 2 and Unreal Tournament."
Which do you prefer, Quake III or Unreal Tournament?
"I don't really care. I have a competitive streak about a mile wide and as long as a game allows me to indulge that, then I'm all for it. They're both fine by me - I usually take on my brothers and I absolutely have to win, no matter what the game."
Er... OK.



DAVID BROADBENT
33, IT engineer

What's on your hard drive?
"Midtown Madness, Driver, Flight Sim 2000, Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation."
Which driving game do you prefer?
"Driver - but only just. I borrowed a friend's steering wheel and had a blast on both of them. I found Midtown Madness a trifle dull."
Anything you're looking forward to?
"Final Fantasy VIII. I loved FFVII, but couldn't finish it."



JAMES NOTMAN
21, Environmental engineer

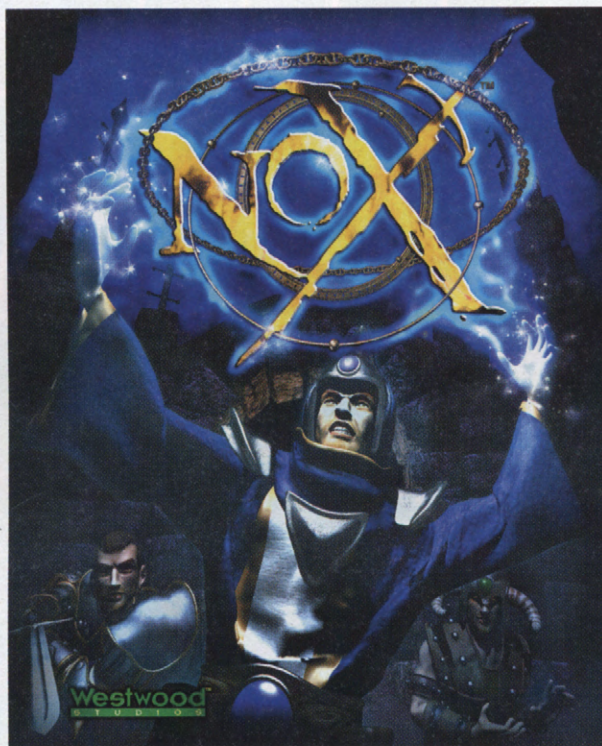
What's on your hard drive?
"Indiana Jones And The Infernal Machine, Starfleet Command, Civilisation: Call To Power, Homeworld and Quake III."
That's a good mix of titles.
"Yeah, Indy was excellent - it really mimicked the films well. Homeworld was spot-on, a really atmospheric game, and System Shock 2 has nudged Half-Life off my hard drive."
Played any turkeys lately?
"Tiberian Sun - same old, same old..."



NEIL BARNETT
26, Webpage designer

What's on your hard drive?
"Baldur's Gate, Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation, Unreal Tournament and Quake III."
What do you think of Unreal Tournament and Quake III?
"They're great, but us poor saps in the UK won't get the most out of them until we get the cost of online gaming down. I'd like to have a go at some of these online RPGs, but I can't afford to spend £500 a quarter on my phone bill."
Well said.

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THE WORLD ACCORDING TO...

LOST TOYS

Guildford is fast becoming the new home of the up-and-coming Britsoft crew. **Paul Presley** takes a quick trip up the A3 to have a chat with one of its latest residents

The irony isn't lost on me. I've come to Guildford to meet Jeremy Longley, Glenn Corpes and Darran Thomas, the trio behind the latest of the seemingly endless amount of Bullfrog breakaway development teams, and have been picked up at the train station by their PR rep. So far we've taken three wrong turns, headed down several dead ends and wound up back at the station more than once. I've come to see the company Lost Toys... and lost we certainly are.

When we finally reach the offices I understand all the confusion, as the building is nondescript and out of the way. It has all the usual signs of a start-up. Lots of space, sparse decoration and a small team of designers and developers hard at work on what they describe on the website as 'Games With A Twist'. Which is as good a place to start as any...

What are 'Games With A Twist'?

Jeremy: There are a lot of games out there that fit into very traditional genres – racing games, fighting games and so on – and they will continue to do so forever. We're not setting out to invent whole new genres and change the world overnight, but what we want to do is something you haven't seen before. It doesn't have to be a big thing or an epic thing, but just something that you haven't seen before. So we may do a driving game or a flying game or a shoot 'em up, but we'll be coming at it from a different angle. That's what we mean by a twist. I never want to do a straight down the line 'genre' game, you know, a *Half-Life* beater or a *Quake* beater. Because it's boring frankly, and everyone else is doing it.

© **Glenn:** It isn't just pure arrogance that makes us

want to do this. It's actually quite pragmatic. It's futile to try and take something on directly. It's much easier to be original than it is to try and 'beat' *Quake* or *C&C*.

I'd have thought it would be easier just to copy a formula.

Glenn: Yeah, but what's the point of being second or third best? You'd be lucky to be fifth best in the *Quake*-clone genre, what with *Half-Life*, *Unreal* and the others.

Jeremy: It's more of a gamble to try and take on *Capcom* and *Street Fighter* than it is to come up with something original. That's what we've all been doing throughout our gaming careers, coming up with original games, so why change now?

Does originality still sell in the PC market?

Jeremy: It certainly can do. It's harder, no question about it. But nothing was ever obtained by taking the easy route. We could have stayed at Bullfrog and churned out *Theme Park 2*. But we chose not to do that. We chose to try and do original stuff and see if we can make it sell. Some of it does, if you get lucky, if you make something that's big. Look at *Driver*, it's gone ballistic.

Glenn: The reason originality doesn't necessarily sell on its own is that the market's very 'immature' or whatever you want to call it. It's all about making sure everyone understands exactly what the game's about and making sure the marketing people are happy to sell it. Those are the main things to get right. There's no reason why you can't do that and be original at the same time, though. Look at Tony Hawk's *Skateboarding* on the PlayStation. That's an

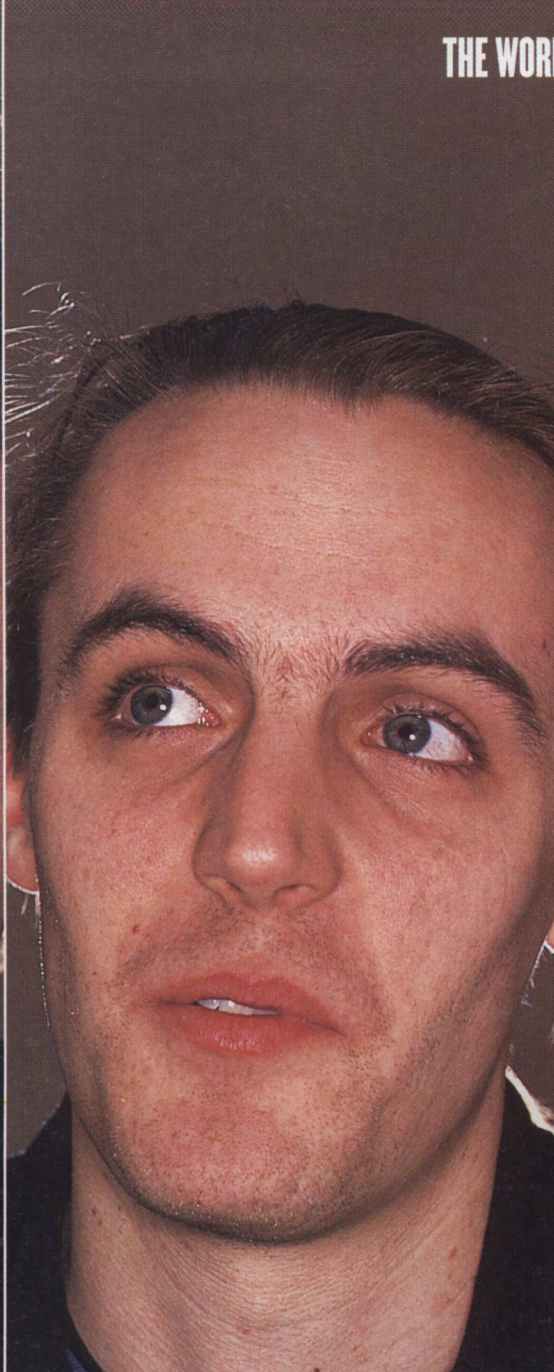
incredibly original game and it's completely accessible. It's an example of how to be original without being obscure. To answer your question, things won't sell if they're obscure, but if people understand what the concept of the game is, originality can sell better than just being one of the best in a recognised genre.

One thing we've noticed about all of the ex-Bullfrog teams is that none of you lack this originality trait. Is this all down to Bullfrog or just a natural reaction to the current clone-filled marketplace?

Glenn: I think everybody there had their own ideas about what made Bullfrog 'Bullfrog' and you can extend that outside it. If you look at *Mucky Foot*, for instance, you can see it there. That's very much the Bullfrog of Guy, Disky and Fin (Guy Simmons, Mike Diskett and Fin McGeachie – the team behind *Urban Chaos* – Ed). Obviously, Lionhead is very much Peter's take on what Bullfrog was. Some elements of *Lost Toys* is what my take on it was.

Darran: I think it's the type of people Bullfrog took on as well. They were generally quite creative and a lot of creative people are quite ambitious anyway. They have their own ideas about how they want things done. Bullfrog was a really good training ground for the creative side of game design. When I started out there I wouldn't exactly have called it the most professional development studio, but it was a really creative environment.

Jeremy: I guess if you look at the people who have managed to break away and set up their own companies, they're going to be the more ambitious ones anyway. You need a certain amount of balls to



“Setting up your own company and keeping it running is a pain, but it has

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The Lost Boys... oops, sorry, The Lost Toys team.

do this. It is quite hard. Setting up your own company and keeping it running is a pain, but it has to be done to give us the freedom to do the games we want to do.

Is that the reason you left in the end? Bullfrog was too restrictive?

Glenn: Loads of little things came together, not least of which was the canning of the project Jeremy and I were working on. (A superhero-based game called *Indestructibles* – Ed) It was also strange when you'd meet the guys who'd already left down at the pub. You felt very bad about still being there (laughs). The guys from *Mucky Foot* all started several years after me and you'd sort of feel as though you had to do it. The three of us were probably the hardcore of the Friday night pub thing for a while – sometimes it was only us three – and we realised there were certain aspects of how we thought the games industry should work that we all agreed with.

That 'small team' approach also seems to be a very British attitude. How do we compare to the US development studios?

Glenn: Bullfrog had several different teams at once. The biggest team I ever worked on was 11, but some were bigger.

Darran: I worked with about 30-odd.

Glenn: There were more than that in the end. *Dungeon Keeper II* was up to about 38. I don't know if there's much difference to how they work in the States. EA was very flexible on this, you can't really blame the company for whatever may have been wrong at Bullfrog. They have weird people in very senior positions that don't have huge teams underneath them, but are very keen to get all this stuff worked out. The Americans are very good at this sort of stuff. It's more to do with the way

that translates to British companies. It's rather like how McDonald's doesn't work in quite the same streamlined way here that it does in the US.

Darran: In the States it's seen a bit more as a career, while over here it's more of a hobby. A lot of people come straight out of university there and think, 'What job am I going to get now?' and the games industry is just one option of many. Whereas I think for a lot of people in the UK it was a hobby they had at an early age, something they got into while they played around with their Sinclair Spectrums and their Atari STs.

Jeremy: You get used to doing stuff on your own.

THE OLD GANG

In some ways it's a shame that teams like *Lost Toys*, *Mucky Foot*, *Lionhead* and *Elixir* will always be saddled with the 'ex-Bullfrog' tag, but no one can deny the influence the old company has had on the industry as a whole. How do they think they're all managing by themselves?

From what you've seen of the ex-Bullfrog teams' games so far, what's impressing you the most?

Glenn: I've not seen *Black & White* since last May, when it was much like the same game being previewed the previous Christmas. It's hard to judge how far it's got.

It's equally hard to write updated previews.

Jeremy: Was it you guys that revealed a few months ago that it was actually an RPG now?

It's hard to know what to call it since every time you ask Peter Molyneux if it will do something, he says yes.

Glenn: That's what he does you see. I can remember working on *Populous II* and a journalist would be doing

an interview with Peter in the same room. He'd be sitting there saying yes to everything that was being asked. After the interview you'd have to ask him if he was serious. (Laughs) It got to the point where you'd be sitting there listening to the interview and making mental notes like, 'Yeah, we could do that, just about.' The game would get designed during the interviews.

What do you make of the game?

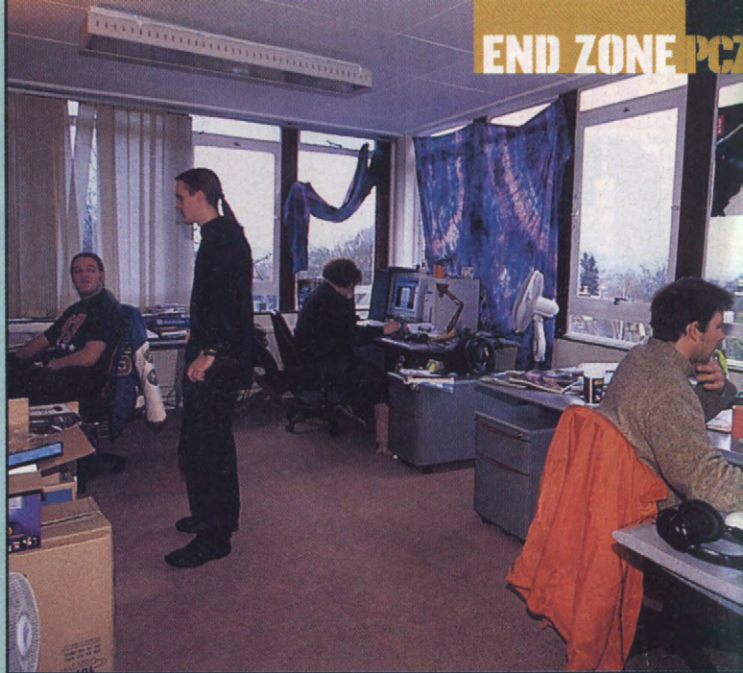
Glenn: The graphical side of it is incredible, there are some very good people working there. One of the guys was working with us on *Indestructibles* for a while, Alex Evans. Technology-wise, with the morphing characters and stuff, it's incredible, but it's been very unclear for a long time just how that relates to the gameplay. Peter's done what he always does. He gets some very good technical people and very good artists to do cool shit. But the game itself... The last time I saw it, one of the artists was showing me how they could grab the monkey and scratch its head like a cat to get it all excited, then slap it round the face a few times to see it react. It was incredible but we still had no clue what the game was about.

How about Mucky Foot?

Jeremy: Well yeah, *Urban Chaos*. They've got a game out – first ones out there. I actually worked on that for two months between Bullfrog and here. It's very much a Disky and Fin type of game, you can really see that in the way it's come out. There are some great ideas in there. It doesn't appear to be selling too well, which is a shame. I don't know what they've announced about *Space Station* yet, but I'm really looking forward to that. It should be excellent. Guy's got some really cool ideas, just spot on. When his heart's in it he can produce some really cool games.



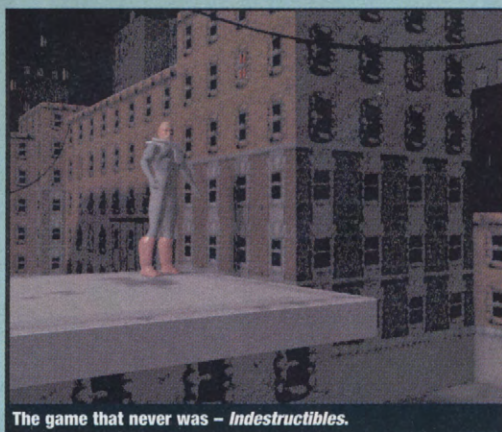
Darran Thomas, head of art at Lost Toys.



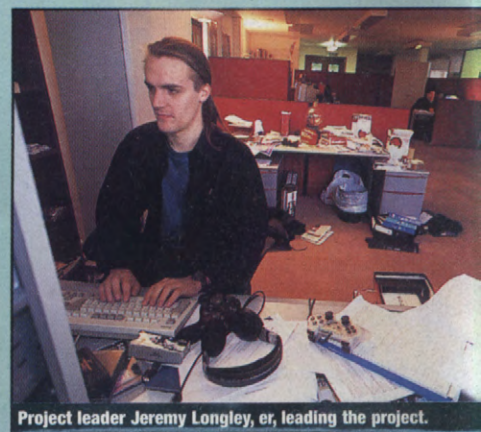
New offices and new outlook on the future of gaming for Lost Toys.



Glenn Corpes, lead designer on Lost Toys' second title.



The game that never was – Indestructibles.



Project leader Jeremy Longley, er, leading the project.

It sounds like you guys still get together quite a bit socially.

All: Oh yeah.

Glenn: We all sort of shared each other's parties at Christmas.

Jeremy: We're competitive to some extent, but not too much.

Darran: (Laughs) At Christmas time, us and everybody at Mucky Foot tend to raid EA's parties.

Glenn: Thing is, they let us in this year didn't they?

Darran: There were enough of us.

Glenn: Last year we all tried and they very begrudgingly let us come in. This year we all strolled down and they were like, 'Come on in! Have a drink!'

Jeremy: (Laughs) Bastards.

Glenn: We were all hoping for a fight.

Glenn: The article in *Develop* was about all these huge claims being made about 'infinite polygon engines' and other graphical technologies, when they're really only slight variations on technologies presented at Siggraph (*The annual graphic designers' get-together* – Ed) last year. It bugs me that someone on a team can knock up a nice progressive mesh engine, then a high-profile game designer can get in the press and start making insane claims about it. The graphics industry is incredibly self-feeding. Anyone with a good idea can talk about it at Siggraph and suddenly last year's high technology becomes this year's common knowledge.

Who are the real innovators?

Glenn: Someone like John Carmack. The stuff in

actually got is a few tricks in the process of creating the data, while the basis of what they're doing is there in textbooks. Whoever patented these things would create a huge minefield when doing new graphic stuff. You'd have to keep making sure you weren't getting too near the *Messiah* patent or whatever. It's something I feel quite strongly about, as I like the way the industry is self-feeding and I don't think it's right for anyone to claim too much innovation on any graphical front. That's not how it works with graphics.

Technology moves too fast for one thing, especially with graphics.

Glenn: I remember when I was working on *Magic Carpet* at Bullfrog. It had quite a nice engine with texture mapping and Gouraud shading at the same time, probably before anyone else did. But Peter was convinced it was some kind of ground-breaking miracle thing and people were offering us loads of money to use it in flight simulators and stuff. Peter was saying, 'We can't sell it, it's worth too much.' I'd written the bloody thing and I was like, 'It's going to be out of date next week. Take the money and run!' It's important to share this stuff because that's what pushes the community on. I just don't like the idea of creating roadblocks just for the sake of PR.

“We're not setting out to invent new genres and to change the world overnight, but what we want to do is something you haven't seen before”

LOST TOYS ON THEIR AIM TO OFFER 'GAMES WITH A TWIST'

INNOVATIONS

Just recently you (Glenn) had an article published in a development trade magazine about the so-called advances that certain companies claim to have been making in the graphics field. One thing I've noticed is that ever since Elixir announced their 'infinite polygon engine' for *Republic*, rival developers have been quick to offer opinions on the subject.

Quake was spoken about for ages. He would get up regularly at Game Developer Conferences and clear things up, explain how lightmaps and BSPs worked.

So what are some of the dangers in making exaggerated claims?

Glenn: The real dangers are when you get people like Dave Perry and Shiny saying they're going to patent their *Messiah* technology, when all they've

The games community has always been fortunate enough to be a friendly place on the whole and Glenn's comments about the self-feeding nature of technology applies across the board. The industry craves innovation and the last thing anyone needs is for legal nonsense to spoil the party. At least the team at Lost Toys know where they stand. **PC2**

COMMENT



As games lurch ever more towards realistic settings, how far can we take things before real life itself becomes totally worthless?

★ KEEPING IT REAL Paul Presley

GAME OF LIFE

Imagine, for a moment, that you're the head of a large gaming software house. (Put on a suit and talk about 'fourth-quarter spends' if it helps the fantasy.) I come to you with a games proposal about getting up in the morning, washing and shaving, reading the paper, going to work, taking the dog for a walk, getting stuck in traffic and pondering the empty meaninglessness of life in the year 2000. *American Beauty* the game, if you will, but without the poetic undertones – and breasts. You'd laugh me out of your office. What's more you'd probably chuckle me into court, giggle me into a restraining order and guffaw me into a mental rest home for good measure.

Yet here we have *The Sims* in which the mundanities of everyday life are not only part of the game, but are the very keys to success. If the middle class suburban dream (or nightmare for all us closet anarcho-Marxists) is no longer the preserve of the real world, if all we need do is switch on a computer to live the 'American dream' – the wife, the 2.4 kids, the faithful dog, the car in the garage – then where does that leave real life?

UTOPIAN NIGHTMARE

While interviewing Richard Garriott (aka Origin's Lord British) in issue 81, he said the following, seemingly innocuous sentence while talking about the bureaucracy involved in running the online carpentry simulator, *Ultima Online*: "Unlike the real world where this sort of thing is generally seen as something painful, in the virtual world, since people are role-playing it, it's actually a lot of fun."



Paul Presley finds out the hard way about the downside of realism in games.

That made me stop and think for a minute. All of our nightmares, everything that's painful in the real world, when simulated on our monitors and controlled by our gamepads, becomes something enjoyable, something entertaining.

So, how far can we push these virtual nightmares? We already simulate acts of wanton violence and come away laughing, albeit nervously of late. Oh, and don't get me started on the hypocritical attitude most of the gaming press has had towards *Soldier Of Fortune*. We all laughed with joy as space marines were blown apart in *Quake*, were duly impressed with the body part targeting of *GoldenEye* and giggled like schoolgirls backstage at a Westlife concert at the messy fates of the various *Half-Life* scientists. *SOF* offers nothing we haven't already seen and

enjoyed, except for a convenient outlet for our moral outrage backlog.

We've even started getting socially responsible in games. *SWAT3*, *Rogue Spear* and the like have begun to make us care about our fellow beings. We try to take them alive, rather than wading in guns ablaze. Christ, even this avenue of action is being closed off to us. Soon the only legitimate outlet for aggression will be to have a large sack of flour hanging in the basement for regular pummelling sessions.

WHITHER REALITY?

But how far can we go in simulating everyday life before we can no longer tell what's real and what's fantasy? I used to dream of being a pilot, of flying into space, of running from a building that's exploding behind me. Thanks to

videogames these urges are no longer as strong, since the virtual experience is often more dramatically vivid and better lit than I could hope for in reality.

Sure I'd still love to fly a plane for real, but I doubt the experience would be as rewarding now the thrill of the unknown is no longer there. Put me behind the seat

So what's the answer? Make our real lives more exciting? Unfortunately, the establishment won't let us go far before wading in with truncheons and claiming we're disturbing the peace. Or should we give up on real life and throw ourselves fully into virtual environments?

The technology is too limited right now to make it

“Unfortunately, the establishment won't let us go far before wading in with truncheons claiming we're disturbing the peace”

of a Cessna (or even a military fighter – anyone from the RAF want to prove me wrong?) and, despite never having been in a cockpit in real life, I'm pretty sure I could actually fly the thing. Is *The Matrix* just a film anymore or is a life of ever-more realistic simulation the most we can really hope for?

fully absorbing, so we're stuck in limbo at the moment. Games are fun and exciting, but not realistic enough to be a full-time alternative to life. And real life just doesn't have enough action in it to make it worthwhile. Perhaps mass suicide is the answer. Or a war. A proper one. With conscription and everything. Perhaps. ☒

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